ADELAIDE:

OR,

THE COUNTERCHARM.

VOL. II.

ADELAIDE:

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A Novel.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"SANTO SEBASTIANO; OR, THE YOUNG PROTECTOR;"
"ROMANCE OF THE PYRENEES:" AND
"THE FOREST OF MONTALBANO."

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CHAPTER I.

As time advanced, and Adelaide drew near the completion of her sixteenth year, Falkland received from Mr. Law (Mr. Mordaunt's London solicitor) an overture of marriage for Miss Bouverie from the Marquis of Glendale, a just emancipated ward of his, who had been so enamoured of the young lady's character, from her conduct relative to Mr. Mordaunt's bequest, that the moment he became of age he went into Kent, incog, to obtain a view of her; and had returned to town so enthusiastically in love, that he would not comply with the advice of Mr. Law to wait for more maturity

in his young enslaver, ere the permission of Mr. Falkland was obtained for his lordship's commencement of the siege of Miss Bouverie's affections; and after stating the considerable and unencumbered rent-roll of the marquis, Mr. Law concluded his epistle by intimating, that his lordship's personal attractions were far above mediocrity, and by pourtraying him as one of the most amiable of mankind.

So advantageous, so unexceptionable, in every point of view, appeared this alliance for his beloved Adelaide, that Falkland knew not upon what plea he could possibly decline it; for yet his own wishes relative to Montagu Bouverie unsubdued, and his promise to Lord De Moreland still registered in his faithful memory, he could not yield this overture his cordial approbation: yet to negative it without an ostensible cause, even to pacify the suspicious Rosalind, seemed impossible; and after much perplexing deliberation he determined that Adelaide herself should, without one influencing comment from Mrs. Falkland or himself, decide the fate of the enamoured marquis.

Mrs. Falkland, at her own desire, was present when this important subject was imparted to Adelaide, and ready prepared to make her anxiously scrutinizing annotations upon both guardian and ward as they discussed the point, which terminated, according to Falkland's expectations, in Adelaide's firm rejection of the Marquis of Glendale's suit, through her scrupulous adherence to her uncle's announced wish of whom her affections were to be preserved for; and from the pleasure pourtrayed on Falkland's countenance when his ward had made her decision, the fears of Rosalind led her, when he retired to write to Mr. Law, to exert her influence over Adelaide to revoke her sentence; but soon Mrs. Falkland had the mortification of finding her efforts could not subdue the sacred reverence with which our heroine considered the last intimated wish of her uncle.

"A wish," she said, "which must ever be considered by her a fetter to her freedom of choice, until Lord De Moreland, or Montagu Bouverie, should appear to release her from it."

"But if neither should appear, are you

to remain fettered for life to solitary singleness?" Rosalind replied: "and, on the other hand, do you mean to accept of Theodore Bouverie, should he ever offer himself, even though your heart may recoil from him?"

"The dawn of my love horoscope has scarcely opened, my dear Mrs. Falkland, therefore I may be allowed time to await the appearance of my ruling planet; and while I pay my dear, unfortunate uncle the duty inspired compliment of waiting to behold his choice ere I voluntarily make mine, I feel firmly assured it formed no part of his wish that I should wed Theodore Bouverie, or any man recommended by Montagu, unless my heart could give its sanction to the measure."

Just at this moment Ladies Beechbrook and Ambrosia Leyburn were announced; when Rosalind, all anxiety to avail herself of their aid to subdue this provoking pertinacity in Adelaide, instantly imparted to them the substance of Mr. Law's letter, with the romantic cause of our heroine's declining so advantageous an alliance.

"Nay," said Adelaide, pained at this

disclosure Mrs. Falkland had so impetuously made, "although my promise to Montagu to await his return ere I disposed of my affections may be deemed childish and romantic, and that those who are interested in my welfare may kindly strive to reason me out of my belief of its being too sacred a promise to be broken, because I made it in seriousness, who can absolve me from my obedience to my captive uncle? For although it was singular for him to place my happiness in the power of so young an arbitrator as Montagu, and that I thought so at the time, even child as I was, and felt hurt most keenly at its slight to my dear guardian's prior right to judge for me, and have given the singularity of it much serious consideration since—yet it is not for me, who know not his motives, to doubt their propriety, and rebel against them."

Shortly after Adelaide's rejection of the Marquis of Glendale's suit letters arrived from Montagu Bouverie, both to Falkland and Mellifont, in which he resumed his long dormant theme of the union of Adelaide and Theodore, as a matter he was become more anxious than ever for.

By the renewal of this lately suspended project, it was clearly told to Falkland that Montagu's affections were no longer hovering near the shrine of Adelaide's charms to become an offering there, but were now in the possession of some more fortunate woman; and whilst he moralized upon the visionary speculations of mortal wishes, he would have experienced regret at having dismissed the suit of the Marquis of Glendale only for the extreme youth of his adored ward, whom he hoped not to see embark in the uncertain seas of wedded life until she had seen a few more years.

Immediately succeeding the arrival of these letters Adelaide completed her sixteenth year; and the period drew near for the Canterbury races, at which Lady Beechbrook and Mrs. Falkland determined the beautiful wards of their husbands should make their appearance: Adelaide only at the amusements of the morning—Lady Ambrosia both at the balls and course.

The different dresses of Lady Ambrosia for the occasion scarcely occupied her anxious thoughts and attention more than they did those of her generous cousin.

who, being the presenter of all to her, begged permission of Lady Beechbrook and Mrs. Falkland to be allowed the pleasure of a vote in their selection, while her own were unconcernedly left to the choice of Rosalind.

At length the important day arrived most eagerly panted for by the fair cousins, the one all wild anxiety for new conquests in this public display of her charms, the other all impatience for the realizing of amusement she was told would be very delightful; and our party set out for Barham Downs, where, arriving in good time, they obtained excellent seats in the stand, where the heart of Lady Ambrosia received that homage it panted for by universal admiration; although the much less showy, but infinitely more elegant, style of her cousin's retiring beauty caused the palm to be generally adjudged to the unconscious Adelaide.

Mrs. Aspenfield, to the amazement of her daughter, had volunteered in joining the party to attend the morning amusements, and to prove in the evenings a companion of propriety for Miss Bouverie;

and she now attended the race-course with all the eagerness of the most juvenile present: but by degrees her countenance saddened, and as the second heat was drawing towards its interesting close, agitation, which she could no longer control, diffused its influence through her frame, and suddenly she fainted.

Falkland instantly conveyed her out in his arms; the alarmed Rosalind, attended by Lord Beechbrook, hurried after; and the grateful Adelaide, interested about all things that could affect the Falklands, hastened, in all the agitation of her ardent feelings, after her friends; and so occupied by her alarm, she saw not an intervening step from the place she sat on into the lobby, and her foot slipping in her unexpected descent of it, she only escaped falling by the prompt aid of a transcendently handsome, very young man, who was on the alert to afford her assistance, and who would not resign his care of her until she reached her party, where he now remained to render his gracefully offered services in the restoration of Mrs. Aspenfield, whose animation soon returned, and who, the

moment she could articulate, expressed an impatient wish to return instantly to Sea-view

"It is local recollections, my dear child," she said, "that have subdued me, and I must fly this place; but no one shall accompany me, for the moment I turn my back on Barham Downs I shall be myself again."

Rosalind now well knew that at Canterbury races her mother had first become acquainted with Mordaunt; that at Canterbury races, the succeeding year, she first discovered that, by following the pernicious advice of her sister Helena to treat him with *hauteur*, to more closely rivet his chains, she had lost all power over his heart; therefore well comprehended what local recollections had subdued her, and made no attempt to persuade her to lengthen her stay in so painful a scene; though she made every entreaty for permission to attend her home; but in her negatives Mrs. Aspenfield was steady: when Adelaide, with all the prompt incentives of her wakeful gratitude to the Falk-

lands, offered to be the companion of Mrs. Aspenfield to Seaview.

"To me it will prove no sacrifice," she added, in a tone and with a look of sweet, resistless supplication: "I am not to attend the balls, you know, dear Mrs. Aspenpenfield; and I am not quite sure that in my heart I like a race, because I fear it is a cruel sport."

"Worse and worse!" said Mrs. Aspenfield, now preparing to step into Falkland's barouche and four, which was drawn up for her. I cannot deprive you of your amusement, my sweet child, when I object to despoiling my own daughter of hers."

"But remember, as my cousin does not go to the balls, and can come back in time for the course to-morrow, it must be more agreeable for her to spend her evening with you than alone at an inn," said Lady Ambrosia with quickness, who had been the close pursuer of Adelaide's footsteps from the stand, and had been very active in accepting the handsome stranger's assistance for the recovery of Mrs. Aspenfield; promptly conjecturing, from his

evident admiration of Adelaide, that he must be the Marquis of Glendale.

"In the evening she might better be with me than at an inn, certainly," said Mrs. Aspenfield; "but there are many hours of intervening amusement you must allow, Lady Ambrosia, for this dear novice in the path of pleasure, and I cannot take her with me."

"But I shall have infinite pleasure in taking you with me, Ma'am, and here is a seat in my guardian's carriage very much at your service," exclaimed Adelaide, playfully doing the honours of the barouche; having, while Mrs. Aspenfield was answering her cousin, glided to the other side of the carriage, and anticipated Mrs. Aspenfield's entering it.

"I certainly cannot be so uncourteous as to displace you, most intrusive young lady," said Mrs. Aspenfield, smiling gratefully upon her; "so that if you will come, you must: but, rely upon it, I shall send you back to-morrow."

"No," said Adelaide, coaxingly; "*bring* me back the morrow after."

"Well, that I promise for; and will

stay at the Fountain while you all attend the course. Rosalind, expect us at breakfast the morning after to-morrow; and feel no uneasiness relative to me, since this dear child will scrupulously act as your kind substitute in dutiful attention to me."

Mrs. Aspenfield now ordered the carriage to move on; and amongst the passing adieus of our heroine was a bow, accompanied by a grateful smile, to the intently gazing, handsome stranger.

On the subsequent morning, after the attentive Adelaide had despatched a courier to Canterbury with the pleasing intelligence of Mrs. Aspenfield's having continued perfectly well since she quitted Barham Downs, as her amiable hostess was engaged letter-writing, she, with a book in hand, strolled to her own arbour, which, in compliment to her juvenile architecture, Mrs. Aspenfield still left unmolested: and where her thoughts often strayed from the subject she was perusing, to contemplate the singularity of her cousin's apparent eagerness for her accompanying Mrs. Aspenfield: but very long she was not thus engaged in the alternate

study of a favourite author and Lady Ambrosia's inexplicable wish for her absence, when a letter was brought to her from Mrs. Falkland, and to her astonishment she read—

"MY DEAR ADELAIDE,

"I am fully determined upon attempting a novel immediately, founded on facts, and its name is to be 'The prescient Lovers; or, Sympathetic Designation.' You, my love, are to be my beautiful heroine, and the exquisitely handsome youth whom fate ordained to secure you from slippery tricks, in this danger-teeming path of life, the interesting hero; who, led by the resistless power of destiny, surrendered his heart, slapdash, through the inspiration of acquiescent duty's prescience to the identical damsel his friends have long informed him he ought to fall in love with. A most singularly *nouvelle* incident, we must all confess.

"So now, my dear Adelaide, as we have reason to expect the races at Canterbury to be rapidly succeeded by those of Cupid and Hymen, you had better commence

the training of your mind for a speedy wedding, lest it should come pounce upon you as mine did, and make you "afraid with any amazement."

"But seriously, my love, the enamoured boy seems in such a post-haste hurry to pay every proper compliment to his dear brother's judicious choice for him, in the power of galloping expedition to evince, that instead of dancing at the ball last night, he employed himself paying court to your dear guardee, to whom Mr. Mellifont presented him.

"Most opportunely, Lord Beechbrook turns out to be a wonderful friend of my Lord Clyde's, to whom he was fag at Eaton; and it seems this love-sick Theodore might have recognised, in our kind neighbour, the intimate friend of his uncle, only for that ophthalmic malady you so mercilessly infected him with; but ere his vision cleared his lordship called him to his recollection, and in the course of the evening, as he played his alternate cards, to win the peer and the guardee to his side, he informed Lord Beechbrook, 'that learning in a letter from Mr. Melli-

font that his predestinated enslaver was to appear at Barham Downs, he had inveigled his uncle and aunt to come into Kent to pay a long talked of visit at Lenham, to afford him an opportunity of being captivated; but who had so promptly done the deed he knew not, until Barham Downs was no longer embellished by your potent charms.'

"And as this ever kind and accommodating Lord Beechbrook has made your fascinated Theodore happy by inviting the Clydes to join us at Canterbury, and then to pay a visit of indefinitude at Beechbrook, during the expected wooing, the almost joy and gratitude phrensied Mercury has taken flight to Lenham this morning to convey the intelligence of his own captivity, and to escort the adoring and compliant *Zio* and *Zia* to join our party this very day: so mind that you come, most dexterous fascinator, with all your witching smiles and magic wiles, to charm them to whom your introduction is to take place to-morrow; but do not come encumbered with any of your childish timidity to vail your attractions; for arm yourself

with a little becoming courage, and nothing can withstand your power of charming.

"My *caro sposo* looks very grave about the business, and would fain persuade me you are too young to make a choice, which may be merely the impression received from a duty inspired compliance with the wish of others: in short, I plainly see, he is seeking excuses to avoid this match, from not thinking it grand enough, I suppose; for what other cause can he in possibility have for objecting to what it was evident your uncle wished for? Mellifont too puts in his word, and says 'Montagu has surprised and disappointed him; for he long thought, whilst he talked of you for his brother, he meant you for himself, and that Montagu was an alliance more suitable for you:' but I wonder who has sanctioned his presuming to give an opinion against Lord De Moreland's unquestionably decided choice?

"We can talk of nothing but of the romantic singularity of this young enamorato selecting you from amid a constellation of beauties for the object of his

serious adoration; and as you are so predisposed to compliance with your uncle's wishes, 'we are threatened with no suspense, no anxiety in the business, Lady Beechbrook says.'

"Adieu, my love! To-morrow will bring you to my arms; when I will tell you what my pen now, I trust, will convince you of, that none can wish you more exalted happiness than

"Yours, affectionately,
"Rosalind Falkland."

Adelaide now refolded the letter of Mrs. Falkland, and burst into tears; and at this moment Mrs. Aspenfield entered the arbor.

"Forgive my intrusion, my dear Miss Bouverie," she said; "but having had my letter from Rosalind too, I was impatient to congratulate you upon finding, from her representation of Mr. Theodore Bouverie, your dutiful acquiescence in your uncle's wishes not likely to prove a painful sacrifice to you."

"Oh! rather, Madam," Adelaide replied, mournfully turning her tear bedewed face to Mrs. Aspenfield, "condole with me

upon the extreme folly I have manifested, through the inadvertence of my simplicity, in making my intentions relative to my dear uncle's wishes so public; that now, overwhelmed by shame at their notoriety, I can never, no never appear at Canterbury to-morrow. Look, dear Madam, read this letter, and you will find that every one is in the secret, the now to me most painful secret, of my purposed acquiescence in my uncle's wishes; and even by Lady Beechbrook I am considered—oh! Mrs. Aspenfield, it is too, too true!—as a forward girl, quite impatient to jump upon the altar steps with this Mr. Bouverie. Oh! silly, silly, infatuated simpleton! never to think of consequences."

And now, whilst Mrs. Aspenfield read her daughter's letter, Adelaide sobbed in agony of wounded delicacy. The letter ended, Mrs. Aspenfield strove to comfort her by every thing she could utter in kindness to alleviate the pangs she felt.

"Mrs. Aspenfield!—dear, dear, dear Mrs. Aspenfield!" at length Adelaide convulsively articulated—"I will lay my life down for you if you will contrive that I

should not go to Canterbury to-morrow, for I well know I should die of shame upon the road to it."

"Answer me ingenuously, my dear Miss Bouverie, now you have seen this young man, have you imbibed any dislike to him, that you thus wish to shun him?"

"He is not in the least like his brother, as I had delusively hoped to find him, Mrs. Aspenfield; but still, from being the recommended of Montagu Bouverie, my dear uncle's choice—a choice now rendered more sacred to me from his misfortunes—from the now, alas! too possible event of this dear parent never knowing that I make his will the guide of mine. Was my uncle present, he might probably, in this instance, find me less amenable to his wishes; but a promise to those who are removed from claiming it becomes doubly a debt of honour; and, from the moment I found the calamity impending of my never beholding my uncle more, I began rigidly to train my heart for an obedience that might, perhaps, eventually prove painful to it."

"Then, my dear Miss Bouverie, since

thus you are dutifully actuated, why wish to shun him?"

"It is only this public introduction to him and his family I wish to shun; where every being I know, you find, Mrs. Aspenfield, is convinced of my *predisposition* to become his. I cannot unvail my heart to every beholder; and the actuating springs of my resolutions and my conduct not exactly known, causes may be assigned that would keenly wound me, and the man himself might be led to despise me, as a romantic visionary at least.

"Had I been wooed and won, then any trivial action of urbanity that could be ascribed to tenderness for the beloved object, though it might bring a blush to my cheeks at being observed, yet would not inflict an insupportable pang of wounded delicacy in my bosom."

"The actuating motives of your conduct, so honourable to your feelings, my dear Miss Bouverie, ought to be known to all your friends," Mrs. Aspenfield replied; "and I will take care to explain all, in justice to the refinements of a very exalted mind."

"Ah! Madam, your meditated goodness cannot have all the effect necessary to save me from humiliation. Many, now in this secret, would comprehend nothing in my vindication. Ambrosia, for instance, can seldom understand any of my feelings; and she, I know, in a sportive mood one day, informed the Miss Woodehouse's and Birch's, 'I had, upon the portraiture of Montagu Bouverie, fallen romantically in love with his brother; and that I was pining in green and yellow impatience for his coming hither to reconnoitre me, and if he thought me worth having, to accept my ready hand:' and all these girls are at Canterbury, and as they have been sneering at me from Ambrosia's thoughtless communications these two months past, can I hope they would spare me now? And under every existing circumstance you cannot wonder, dear Madam, that I shrink from the idea of going to Canterbury now.

Mrs. Aspenfield, sincerely pitying her distress, now returned to the house, to write her own apology and Adelaide's for not joining the party at Canterbury races any

more; and in her letter she did every possible justice to the feelings which actuated Adelaide, both in her *predisposition* to evince obedience to her uncle's wishes, and in her desire to shun the public gaze of observation at an introduction of such a nature.

The moment this letter was actually despatched, Adelaide found her spirits renovate, and her tears ceased to flow. "Not," she said to Mrs. Aspenfield, "that she should feel happy or comfortable in her introduction to Mr. Theodore Bouverie, even if it was to take place in the darkest cavern in the bowels of the earth, for even there she should feel and look like the simpleton she had acted the part of; since the more she reflected, the more reason she perceived to censure her own silly ingenuousness upon the subject."

CHAPTER II.

Immediately after breakfast the subsequent morning, as Adelaide was fondly caressing Frederick Falkland, just arrived from the priory to spend the day with his grandmother, Mr. Theodore Bouverie was suddenly announced; and that young gentleman entered as bearer of letters from Lady Beechbrook and Mrs. Falkland to Mrs. Aspenfield; her ladyship's epistle begging leave "to introduce a most amiable young friend of hers to Mrs. Aspenfield, who, preferring a morning ride to the amusement of the race-course, had volunteered to bring an account of the health of the dear recluses of Seaview to their dissipated friends at Canterbury."

The letter of Rosalind was also one of introduction; but it informed her mother "that it being the earnest wish of her heart to promote the union of Theodore and Adelaide, she entreated her to give every possible encouragement and assistance to the young man's suit, which so

decidedly met the approbation of Lord and Lady Clyde, that they had returned on the instant with him from Lenham to join Lord Beechbrook's party at Canterbury, where their disappointment was very great at finding they were not to see Adelaide; while, as to Theodore himself, he seemed so miserable at her absence, that they had granted his petition for leave to spend the day at Seaview, in the shade of that retirement which Adelaide coveted, if Mrs. Aspenfield would kindly compassionate a dying swain, and afford him a nominal dinner."

Poor Adelaide, with delicacy painfully wounded in the humiliating belief that Theodore himself even knew her *predisposition* to be dutifully his, found her still younger adorer, Frederick, a most useful auxiliary, not only at the moment of Theodore's entrance, but in many a moment during a day that was not to her a day of comfort; for although each look, each tone, each word, the exquisitely handsome Theodore gave expression to, convinced her more and more that inclination was leading him to address her; yet dissatis-

fied with her own conduct in embarrassing ingenuity, and without one line of encouraging approbation from her guardian, she was not herself; and this embarrassment she was too conscious of, taking from the sweet, easy graces of her natural character, robbed her of half her fascinations; and those who, like Mrs. Aspenfield, were intimately acquainted with her, must have promptly beheld and missed the absence of the native charms of her winning manners; but to Theodore that alloy was not conspicuous, and he considered her but still the more attractive for her alluring diffidence; while Mrs. Aspenfield consoled herself with thinking how Adelaide's powers of enchanting this evidently captivated lover would expand each succeeding interview.

At length, as Mrs. Aspenfield and her young guests were taking their coffee after dinner, the horses of Theodore were announced to be in waiting.

"It is not possible," exclaimed Theodore, in a tone of chagrined surprise, "that it is seven o'clock;" and, upon learning that it was even beyond that time, he ordered an half-hour's walk for the luckless

steeds and groom of a man in love; and even at the expiration of that period he reluctantly arose to depart, saying, as he did so—

"I find your hospitable mansion, Mrs. Aspenfield, so fascinating a spot to me, that only to fulfil an engagement with a fair lady could I do violence to my inclinations in departing so soon; but ere Lady Beechbrook and Mrs. Falkland conferred on me the honour and happiness of being their letter-bearer hither, I had unwittingly accepted the challenge of the lively Lady Ambrosia Leyburn to dance with her at the ball to-night, who fancying me, I believe, too dull for a votary of Terpsichore, in the ebullition of her sportive raillery defied me to the honour of being her partner for the alternate dances through the evening. Have you any message, Miss Bouverie, for me to deliver to your playful cousin?"

"Give my love to her, if you please, Sir," replied the blushing Adelaide.

"Be wary ere you entrust me with that precious charge," returned Theodore, in a tone of impressiveness, whilst he smiled in

gaiety; "since such a trust may prove too dangerously tempting for the integrity of the bearer to resist a breach of."

Early the following morning Falkland arrived at Seaview, a full hour ere Mrs. Aspenfield's breakfast, which hour he spent in earnest conference with his interesting charge upon the subject of her union with Theodore Bouverie; in which, whilst he left the decision of the measure to her own feelings, he entreated her, with all the sound advice of superior wisdom, and with all the tender interest of an affectionate father, not to be lured into an irrevocable engagement by any romantic point of honour, entangled by her childish promises to those who had lightly spoken their wishes for distant events, and were not now present, ultimately to weigh every circumstance in favour of and against her chances of happiness with Theodore Bouverie.

Adelaide earnestly entreated her guardian's opinion upon her probable hopes of happiness with him should he indeed prove an earnest wooer, and she accept him; when Falkland assured her he knew nothing reasonably to object to in her new

suitor but his extreme youth; that certainly he felt some obtruding demurs, but he believed they ought to be placed to the account of disappointed hope; out of humour at that disappointment, and looking fastidiously with the eye of prejudice upon even those who were not accessary to that overthrow of expectation.

"My wishes had early designed my Adelaide for the wife of the only being I thought congenial to her excellence," continued Falkland, "Montagu Bouverie; but his wishes have not coalesced with mine, since he has written, by the last ships from Malta, to his brother and Lord and Lady Clyde most earnestly upon this favourite project, for insuring his brother's happiness in the connubial state; and angry and jealous too, I believe, for this unexpected slight to my Adelaide's permanent power of charming, in Montagu's not making those exertions for his own happiness with her, I find myself, in defiance of every feeling of justice, displeased with this obtruded object; and to prejudice only I am convinced must be ascribed my fancied objections—my considering

him ungenial in disposition to you; for he wants the animated vivacity of his brother and my Adelaide, which seemed, when I beheld them together, as reflecting mirrors, one giving back its refulgent brilliancy to the other."

"Mr. Theodore Bouverie seemed very lively here yesterday, Sir," said Adelaide, brightly blushing, as she struggled with a deep drawn sigh, now scarcely knowing what she said; painfully convinced her wishes had unconsciously assumed the same unavailing bias with her guardian's.

"If you like him, Adelaide, I—"

"My dear guardian!" exclaimed Adelaide, with cheeks mantling with the most brilliant blushes, "I have imbibed no predilection for him yet—at least no voluntary one; but, believing I was meritoriously performing my duty to the sacred wishes of my unfortunate uncle, I was all day yesterday striving to train my heart to beholding him with partiality; and knowing him to be so mentally endowed, so estimable in moral excellence, and finding him so prepossessing in aspect and in manners, I believe it very possible I soon

may behold him without indifference: but if you, dear Sir, approve him not, and think my compliance with my uncle's wish can, with honour, be absolved, I will unhesitatingly reject him."

"No, my love, no;" replied Falkland: "I would not have you precipitate in your decision either way. There is, I doubt not, much to approve in this young man; nay, if half the perfections his family affirm him to be gifted with are his, you will be eminently fortunate in being united to him; but I would have you not allow the predisposing influence imbibed from your amiable feelings relative to your uncle's wishes to beguile you into an illusive dream of fancied attachment, nor the persuasions of *any one* lure you into a premature assent, ere conviction shall be indisputably conveyed to your bosom, my child, that you can only know happiness in an union with Theodore Bouverie."

The conversation of Falkland and Adelaide upon this important subject was now terminated for the present, by the breakfast bell of Mrs. Aspenfield summoning them to their attendance at that repast:

and shortly after it was ended Falkland took leave, that he might visit his cherub at the priory ere he galloped back to Canterbury, to attend his Rosalind at Barham Downs.

Adelaide, not enduring the idea of appearing to await in ceremony's prim order the probable visit of Theodore, played truant soon after the departure of her guardian, and with Obearn set out to some of her old haunts, where she still administered the balm of pity to those who wanted it, although not daily, as she was wont to do ere her removal to Mordaunt Priory; and she had just completed her charitable round, and was persuading her generally compliant nurse to brave the heat of the sun, and climb the cliffs, and visit Falkland's long-favoured retreat, when suddenly both her ascent and her entreaties were suspended by the appearance of Lord Beechbrook, with another gentleman, a stranger to her, at her side.

"My lovely truant from the haunts of pleasure!" exclaimed his lordship, taking her cordially by the hand, "although you left no clew at Mrs. Aspenfield's for finding

you, yet from intuition, it seems, I learned the circle to trace you through was that of benevolence; and by the dew-drops of gratitude you left to glisten in many an eye I learned the transit of pity's pole-star; and now, having found you, myself and friend will gladly do what Mrs. Obearn has been shaking her head at, draw towards your native spheres with you. Come, Adelaide, I challenge you to a race up to Falkland's seat."

Adelaide, at first thrown into all the embarrassed agitation the sudden appearance of Lord Beechbrook awakened, in apprehension of his raillery relative to Theodore, now finding such was not his lordship's present disposition, and grateful for this forbearance, she with a playful nod and smile sprung at once into the action of accepting his challenge, hoping that during her flight she should recover her composure sufficiently to enable her to inquire for her friends at Canterbury without looking like a conscious simpleton; and not until she arrived at the Lover's seat did she perceive how much she had distanced his lordship, when she beheld him far,

far behind her, although considerably advanced before his friend, who was, however, making fast progress in his ascent.

"Oh!" exclaimed Adelaide, laughing, as Lord Beechbrook drew near her, "I need not have scampered away such an extravagant profusion of my precious breath had I had but the least presentiment of what a lazy man my competitor was."

"Faith, most fleet-winged Atalanta, it is well for your chances of becoming a wife," replied his lordship, "that it is not necessary to outrun you to obtain you in marriage."

It was not very promptly that either Lord Beechbrook or his friend recovered their exhausted breath; they therefore gladly remained a considerable time to rest on the Lover's seat, and where Lord Beechbrook drew Adelaide into her usual style of cheerful conversation with him, such as they generally held when there was no alarming stranger near to draw the vail of Adelaide's timidity over her fascinating powers; for, although there was now a stranger present, he looked so benignly on her, she feared him not; and

there appearing nothing strikingly superior in his aspect or deportment, she concluded, since Lord Beechbrook omitted his introduction to her, that he was merely some tenant of his lordship's, whom he thought it unnecessary to announce.

But although they remained rather more than an hour in their elevated station, Lord Beechbrook never once mentioned Theodore, or uttered any allusion that could, by awakening Adelaide's confusion, embarrass her in the most trifling degree; but when they had descended from the heights, and entered the paddock before Mrs. Aspenfield's house, his lordship exclaimed, as if suddenly coming to his recollection—

"Bless me, how remiss I have been! I have totally omitted to introduce my friends to each other: Adelaide, my old school-fellow Lord Clyde; my lord, the relative of your nephew's, Miss Bouverie."

"Now, now, now," continued his lordship, laughing, "change like the chameleon, child, to every colour under the sun; become dumb, as if you knew not how to speak; and rivet your eyes upon the

ground, as if they were not worth looking at. Come, Adelaide! let your eyes dance again in playful measure to the tuneful cheerfulness of your sweetly flowing accents, guided by sense and information, just as you went on while you believed my earliest friend here an honest grazier come to bargain for my Scotch cattle and Marino sheep."

Adelaide, now seriously angry with herself for allowing the name of Lord Clyde to effect such a transition, so indicative of consciousness, relative to his younger nephew, made an effort for the resumption of her composure, so determined upon success, that she did effect an air almost totally unembarrassed as, with tolerable steadiness, she inquired for Lady Clyde.

Lord Clyde's introduction to Mrs. Aspenfield having taken place ere with Lord Beechbrook he went in pursuit of their lovely attraction to Seaview, an elegant collation awaited their lordships' return; and whilst they were partaking of it, some turn in the conversation led Mrs. Aspenfield to say, "she hoped all their party at

Canterbury found themselves happy and comfortable there."

"Not all, Madam," replied Lord Clyde, smiling; "I can answer for one individual who is very much otherwise there. A hopeful nephew of mine, who finds such fascinations in Seaview, that with the utmost difficulty could even my commands detain him at Canterbury this morning to supply Lord Beechbrook's place and mine, in aiding Mr. Falkland in attending our fair ladies to the course."

"I think I need scarcely ask," said Adelaide, anxious to lead the conversation from a possible return to the allusion of the fascinations of Seaview for Theodore, "if my wishes were realized by my cousin's looking well at the balls, and spending her evenings pleasantly there."

"Your cousin, sweet and affectionate Adelaide!" replied Lord Beechbrook, "was the happiest of the happy at the balls, being by all adjudged the most beautiful girl there; though not the finest woman, Mrs. Aspenfield, since there your daughter bore the palm. But although my

ward has been wonderfully admired, I have perceived no symptom of serious conquest made on the occasion; which has disappointed Lady Beechbrook exceedingly, who wishes Lady Ambrosia to marry early; believing, poor primitive matron! that would prove a certain specific against her inordinate love of admiration, and propensity to flirting with all who have one spark of flirtation's tinder in their composition."

At length their lordships departed. Mrs. Aspenfield and Adelaide dined *tête-a-tête*, and were just commencing their tea when Theodore Bouverie arrived, to compensate in the evening for the morning of happiness his uncle's impatience for an introduction to Adelaide had deprived him of; and was so alluringly pleasing in his manners and conversation, that Mrs. Aspenfield, highly charmed with him, could not find the power of uttering a negative to the earnest petition he made, when at about eleven o'clock his horses were announced, "that she would permit him the honour of attending her *déjeûné* the following morning."

The rapture of Theodore upon this auspicious reception of his petition ebulliated in illumined joy from his countenance, as he gracefully expressed his gratitude; and now, moment after moment, he found new excuses to prolong his stay; until Mrs. Aspenfield playfully told him, "she could no longer grant him house-room, since it would be most exceedingly indecorous to give a young gentleman an apartment in a single lady's mansion all the night."

But on the following morning a billet from Theodore awaited the unclosing of Adelaide's eyes, expressing, in all the tenderness of lamentation which his yet to her unavowed passion could sanction, the bitterness of that disappointment inflicted on him in not only being deprived of the happiness of seeing her that day, but many days, he feared, since an express had just arrived to him with the afflicting information of Lady Bowcastle, Lady Clyde's aunt, and his great aunt, being supposed to be at the point of death, and desiring to see her niece and him immediately—a sad summons, which Lord and Lady Clyde

and himself considered it their imperative duty to obey; and as they must, in compliance with that duty, set out at an early hour, he was deprived of the gratification of fulfilling his engagement of breakfasting with the kind and amiable Mrs. Aspenfield.

CHAPTER III.

When the Falklands returned from Canterbury races, Adelaide joined them at the priory, where two overtures of marriage awaited her, in consequence of her having been seen that one morning at Barham Downs; one from a viscount's eldest son, the other from a young baronet—both of which were, of course, politely declined: and as from Lady Beechbrook Rosalind kept few secrets, Lady Ambrosia heard of these serious conquests; and her chagrin could not be concealed from observation, because her potent charms had failed in such a gratifying effect: however, much consolation she derived for her wounded vanity in placing it to the account of her cousin's large fortune, and still greater expectations, which *purchased* for her this triumph over her superior beauty.

In a very few days after the return of Lady Ambrosia from Canterbury she walked over to Mordaunt Priory, and, summoning Adelaide to a private conference, after

a little embarrassment of innovating confusion, informed her she had a very great favour to entreat of her:—"I want you, dear, dear, sweet, kind Adelaide! to write a beautiful, witty, playful letter for me."

"As good a letter as I can fabricate," said the half laughing Adelaide, "I promise you, my idle coz; but you must rest contented with its being neither beautiful nor witty, since the incapacity of the amanuensis you have unadvisedly applied to forbids my being guarantee for that. But what is this exquisite letter to be about?"

"About yourself."

"Oh! unmerciful coz! And could you expect me to be witty at my own expense?"

"Yes, and at mine too, and at the expense of all the people in our family circles; for I want you just to write a pretty, playful letter about us all; describing, in your own animated but elegant way of writing, how we have jogged on since the departure of Lord and Lady Clyde."

"And pray, most lively fancied Lady Ambrosia! who is this playful delineation of sombre actions to be addressed to, may I ask?"

"Why, to a—to—you will be surprised, Adelaide, but don't be jealous, child—to Theodore Bouverie."

"To Theodore Bouverie!!!"

"Yes, even so," returned Lady Ambrosia, affecting to cough, to conceal her change of colour; "and I must write to him, or lay myself open to censure for reprehensible ill manners, for not answering his letter which I this morning received."

"Since I am to have the employment of answering the letter, my curiosity must, in consequence, be gratified by learning its theme."

"Well now, suppose, to recompence you for the trouble youth is moment must take, that my letter may go by return of post, suppose I tell you more, for the gratification of your curiosity than the letter of Theodore can do, what will you say to me?"

"Why that you do as you would be done by."

"Well then, the morning your *inamorato* set out with the Clydes for Lady Bowcastle's, as I happened to arise very early too, we had a *tête-à-tête* ere the other good folks appeared, in which he strongly im-

portuned me to prevail on you to grant him the happiness of corresponding with him during his absence; when I frankly told him, 'you were so invincible a prude, I knew you would sooner die than commit the horrible indecorum of holding such indiscreet intercourse with a man who had not yet gone through the form of offering himself, and been accepted.'"

"You did not exactly say all this, I trust, Ambrosia?" said Adelaide, gravely, and blushing with painful apprehension.

"And if I did, it need not alarm you, for he could attach no serious meaning to it, since I was in a most lively, rattling humour; for he seemed so dolorous at the idea of aunty's death, and the misery of a separation from you, that, as your friend and representative, I strove all I could to amuse away his low spirits; and so, in my madcap frolics, I said, 'I would write to him, and tell him how you bore his absence, how many tears you dropped, how many sighs you heaved, and so forth;' all the time having no idea whatever of his taking me at my word, as you can readily imagine, knowing what a vile, bad scribe I

am; but lo! and behold! this morning a letter arrived claiming my promise, and here it is for you to read ere you set about the answer."

Adelaide now perused a short but very elegant letter, claiming her ladyship's most kindly volunteered promise of writing to him; and while it was evident throughout this epistle Theodore's anxiety was to hear of Adelaide, he gallantly expressed the happiness he should feel it, and the honour he should consider it, receiving a letter from Lady Ambrosia.

"But," said Adelaide, when she ceased reading a composition that suffused her cheeks with pleased emotion's bright vermilion, "copying is so slow a process, Ambrosia, with you, I fear, let me be ever so expeditious in my part, the letter cannot possibly be ready for this day's post."

"I don't mean to copy it, child: you must sign my name to it, and let it go as my performance altogether—that is, if he has never seen your writing; mine I have taken good care he should not."

"But although he has never seen my writing, yet that is no reason he never

may, Ambrosia; and then, my dear cousin, it would be so awkward to account for my writing in your name; and surely, therefore, it will be much better to avoid that possible embarrassment by your copying it, though you should run the chance of delaying it one post."

"But your writing is so beautiful; and mine is really so vile, I cannot bear to exhibit it."

"In this instance, if you permit me, I can touch up the writing to give it the appearance of steadiness," said the kind and affectionate Adelaide, who promptly wrote a most beautiful letter for her cousin; and Lady Ambrosia was in raptures with a composition so consonant to her wishes.

"This epistle cannot operate like Madame Maintenon's," said Lady Ambrosia, as on the following day Adelaide gave to the copy her beautifying touches, "since the composer of this is already the beloved of the man it is addressed to."

But the pirating vanity of Lady Ambrosia had revelled in a fancy of some such similar effect; and high indeed she found the exultation of that vanity when the an-

swer of Theodore arrived, paying the most elegant tribute of eulogium which enthusiastic admiration could bestow upon an epistle so beautifully replete with all that could reflect honour on her vivacity, her wit, her more solid endowments and adornments.

Lady Ambrosia showed this letter to Adelaide with as much exulting triumph as if the merit she was in it complimented upon had really been her own; and Adelaide, in its perusal, while she felt a glow of animated pleasure in the reflection that any thing which she had power to do could call forth such sweet eulogium from one so favoured by genius and information, yet was too innately good-natured to humble her cousin by reminding her "she ought to merit panegyric ere it elated her:" but when called upon to write another epistle for Lady Ambrosia to charm Theodore Bouverie, she gently hinted—

"That if her cousin would but exert herself in the improvement of her own endowments, she would not long have occasion to apply to any friend to aid her as a correspondent."

The intoxicated vanity of Lady Ambrosia had completely carried her away from all recollection of her having no claim to the eulogiums which so elated her; and when thus gently reminded of the humiliating fact by a friend who earnestly wished her to improve her own not deficient talents, she felt so indignant in her mortification, she forbore, as on the forwarding of the preceding letter, to send it off to the post from the correcting hand of her cousin; and this second and still more beautiful composition she took home with her to Beechbrook for the purpose of adding a postscript, which cost her infinite study to accomplish, "requesting him not to compliment her attempts at letter-writing any more, since Miss Bouverie looked grave at it, nor to expect to hear from her again, since her cousin disapproved of their correspondence, seeming to suspect her having led him into it, to gratify some secret predilection she had imbibed for him."

But Lady Ambrosia need not have plotted for the answer of Theodore, not further elating the epistolary vanity of her cousin, since Adelaide was doomed to see it not;

for the night preceding its arrival, accompanied by one from Lord Clyde to Lord Beechbrook, announcing Lady Bowcastle to be not only out of danger, but in a state of such rapid recovery that Lady Clyde, himself, and nephew would be at Beechbrook the following day, to commence their visit there, Frederick Falkland was taken ill; and Adelaide, not finding in her heart to leave his bedside one moment, and Lady Ambrosia affecting to fear the air of a sick room, "while uncertain what complaint was mewed up there," did not visit her cousin, where gratitude to Falkland and affection to his child had placed her, so that they met not the day the letter came, and on the morrow appeared a terrible interdict to their doing so.

Frederick was pronounced by his father to be in a scarlet fever of an alarming nature; and not all the arguments of his persuasive eloquence, nor the commands of his authority, could remove the gratefully attached Adelaide from the pillow of his child.

"No, my beloved guardian! no," she said, "I will not leave him. I cherish no

fears. His mother, for the sake of the infant she still nourishes, cannot come near him; and I will supply her place to the utmost of my ability, and nurse your child as I would the brother of my heart."

The moment Falkland was convinced of the nature of his child's malady he flew to Rosalind, and, after gently announcing to her the afflicting intelligence, gave her the alternative of his remaining with her, and giving the care of their boy to other medical hands, or separating himself wholly from her until all danger subsided, to do that duty by his boy which another as important duty excluded her from; but to reflect, in the exercise of that duty Adelaide would be the companion of his toil and his anxiety: lightly and unadvisedly, therefore, she must not make her decision; since she, knowing the direful weakness of her mind upon one point, knew the importance, perhaps to her future peace, of her determination, which, if pronounced in favour of their poor, suffering boy, must be irrevocable."

The distress of Rosalind's mind was now beyond description, and in all the agoniz-

ing conflict of warring passions, the manifold dangers which menaced her husband in his station by his son, led her to consign that son to the care of other doctors; but in a very few hours, the mournful resignation of Falkland's eloquent countenance, whilst she could perceive his heart was rent with anguish, with all the mother's feelings pleading in her bosom, she gave him a frantic embrace, formed on the belief that death or Adelaide would divide them for ever, and sent him to their child: but, although terrorized lest contagion should reach her Danvers, no persuasion could induce her to remove to Seaview or to Beechbrook; and as that could not be effected, Mrs. Aspenfield came to the priory to comfort her direfully afflicted daughter.

Soon, from Falkland's anxious observations by the pillow of his child, he had the joy to find conviction that, although the disease was violent, it was not of fatal tendency; and the threatened sore throat, from early, judicious treatment, fading into nothing of consequence, the infection became a matter of much less apprehension,

and at the expiration of ten days Frederick was declared convalescent; and by the arrangement of every prudent precaution, at the end of four days more Falkland pronounced the necessity for the exile of himself and Adelaide from the society of the family terminated.

The joy of Rosalind almost subdued her reason when she again beheld her husband safe from infection, and could, from the affecting tenderness of his manner in their first interview, build hope for her apprehensive feelings of his affections still being unequivocally hers; and little less extravagant were her emotions when Adelaide, flying to her arms, was encircled there with all the warmth a mother's gratitude could inspire, as she blessed and thanked her for risking her own life to tenderly nurse her child.

When the Clyde party arrived at Beechbrook, the distraction of Theodore on finding the peril which Adelaide had encompassed herself with was extreme, and nothing short of the most absolute commands of his uncle and aunt, delivered in the most solemn manner that could enforce obedience, could restrain him from flying to

Mordaunt Priory to share her peril, should he fail in persuading her to withdraw from it; and all that the apprehensive restrictions of Lord and Lady Clyde left for him to relieve his anxiety was to post continually to the priory, to learn the bulletin of the hour; and on these embassies of solicitude Lady Ambrosia, almost distracted for the safety of her cousin too, implored to be the companion of his walk; and, occupied by these constant rambles of anxiety, they were scarcely ever in the Beechbrook mansion.

Adelaide knew of all these anxious inquiries, and had received innumerable notes, expressive of their mutual alarms, from her cousin; and therefore pained and disappointed was her ardent, grateful heart on the evening of the day she joined once more the family circle, when this hitherto most anxiously inquiring pair arrived to greet her on her safety and restoration to them, to perceive, or fancy she perceived, less cordiality in their congratulations than she had experienced from any other individual she yet had seen; and Lady Ambrosia promptly exclaimed at, " how shockingly

her dear cousin looked!" yet without one tone of concern or kind allusion to the cause.

"Adelaide's amiable, nay I may call it magnanimous sacrifice of her rest, her voluntary toil, her natural alarms for her own safety, and, above all, the pitying anxiety of her feeling heart for the safety of a being she regarded, have conspired, I grieve to say, in affecting her looks most materially," said Rosalind, in a tone that forcibly betrayed how indignant were her sensations at this unfeeling remark of Lady Ambrosia's.

Her ladyship blushed with chagrin, and soon after arose to take leave, saying, "Lady Beechbrook had desired them to return without delay, after they should give hers and my lord's best love to Mr. and Mrs. Falkland, and that if they would be troubled with so large a company on the morrow, the whole Beechbrook party would take a family dinner with them."

Falkland and Rosalind sent a cordial acceptance of the pleasure and honour intended for them, while Adelaide's cheeks were

mantled with the bloom of consciousness of what this dinner party was designed for. Theodore's cheeks were suffused with the tints of consciousness too, and the moment he with his beautiful companion had taken their departure, Mrs. Falkland exclaimed—

"What a foolish, unthinking girl that is, to drag the man away so soon, when she knew it must be death to him to go, though politeness impelled his attendance upon her home!"

Shortly after Falkland quitted the room, and did not return until the supper tray had been some time awaiting his arrival.

"Oh! where have you been, you truant?" said Rosalind, tenderly, the moment he appeared. "You have been so long, so cruelly separated from me, you ought not to leave me now one moment, Augustus."

"I walked to Beechbrook, my love," he replied, "to—to say we should be happy to see them all."

"Why, surely, we sent them word of that by Lady Ambrosia?" returned Rosalind, with quickness.

"We did so, Rosalind, but—but I

thought they might come more comfortably if I assured them they would encounter no danger by doing so."

They all now commenced their light repast; and although Rosalind talked and rattled in all the wild ebullitions of rapture, at having the most terrible of her late alarms so happily terminated, yet not all her gaiety could succeed in quite removing from the anxious observation of the sensitive Adelaide a cloud of thoughtfulness she had remarked upon her guardian's brow since his return from Beechbrook.

Adelaide arose next morning, after a night of profound, undisturbed repose, looking much less *shockingly* than she had done the preceding day; and as expectation whispered a probability of Theodore's calling, she could not but feel pleased that she did not look so cadaverously spectral as she had done when her cousin, not very feelingly, had remarked her aspect.

In Adelaide's expectation of seeing Theodore she was not disappointed: he arrived soon after breakfast, accompanied by Lady Ambrosia, both on horseback; come to se-

duce her into taking exercise the most salubrious for her, they said.

Adelaide, grateful to both for this attention, spontaneously assented, and flew off to equip for an equestrian expedition; and on her return from her dressing-room Mrs. Falkland, in surprise, enquired, "why she had not put on her new habit, and not that odious thing she had outgrown?"

Adelaide blushed, and hung her head, as, with a smile, she replied—"For a woman's reason, Mrs. Falkland, because—— But, really, you remember it did not fit me?"

"I know it was considerably too large for you; but surely it was sent back to Stultz to alter, was it not?" said Rosalind; when at this moment Lady Ambrosia re-entering from the grounds, where she had called Theodore to admire a prospect, Mrs. Falkland at one glance perceived what Adelaide had done with her new, most becoming, and beautifully embroidered habit.

Miss Bouverie's horse now being announced, the trio proceeded to depart; when in the hall they encountered Falkland, who, wishing them a pleasant ride,

"hoped they would not allow Lady Ambrosia to be their guide, since he should not approve of his ward being led out of the right path."

Adelaide inquired his meaning.

"Lady Ambrosia being pilot in their pedestrian ramble last night," he replied, "ingeniously contrived to maze herself and companion in a wood on their way from hence to Beechbrook, and they only found their path home as I was taking my departure from Lord Beechbrook's."

"A most notable contrivance, indeed!" said Adelaide, smiling. "Why from hence to Beechbrook is the most plain, undeviating road in the whole neighbourhood."

"True, Adelaide," replied Lady Ambrosia, with a sweet, conciliating smile; "but when we were deeply engaged talking of that illness we feared impending over my beloved cousin from her fatigue, no wonder if neither party attended to the path we trod."

Adelaide blushed to the deepest vermilion tint, and so did Theodore, whose tremor was so excessive, he seemed scarcely to

possess power to assist the lovely being of his professed homage upon her steed.

Our heroine, from early habit, was an excellent horsewoman, although not possessing one particle of masculine courage to accomplish her for a professed and daring equestrian; Lady Ambrosia was, on the contrary, an awkward, timid rider; and this day betraying much more violent fears than her cousin had ever before seen her evince, she could not feel hurt or offended at her ladyship monopolizing, almost exclusively, the attentions of Mr. Bouverie, to pacify her alarms and lure her into courage, but the reverse. She was pleased with his patient kindness, and thought how amiable it was in man to give, with gentle tenderness, that protection, that assistance the weaker sex looked up to him to yield; and, highly satisfied with her excursion, she returned to dress for dinner, with a visible improvement in her looks from the exercise she had taken, to the infinite satisfaction of Rosalind.

When the toilet of Adelaide was completed, she went, as desired, to the dress-

ing-room of Mrs. Falkland for inspection; when her appearance most highly pleased her anxious friend, who thought, that although through recent fatigue and anxiety her beauty had lost its brilliancy, yet her whole aspect was so sweet, so delicate, so elegant, she doubted not that to all, as well as to her, she would appear an object of resistless interest.

CHAPTER IV.

The affecting kindness with which Adelaide was greeted by Lords and Ladies Beechbrook and Clyde so forcibly fastened on her gratitude, that to evince her perception of it she determined upon every exertion to be herself, and to seem at ease, and to converse unembarrassedly with friends who were so partial and so kind to her; and so well did she succeed in the uses of her natural fascinations, that Lord and Lady Clyde were inthralled with rapture at the judicious, charming choice their darling adopted child had made; and each succeeding moment of augmenting admiration his lordship found it more and more difficult to restrain from ebulliating into allusions to the expected union.

At dinner, Theodore, seated between Lady Ambrosia and her cousin, performed mechanically the civilities of the table; but he seemed so abstracted, so incapable or unwilling to enter into conversation of even the most trivial nature, that Adelaide

amazed, a little pained, and a good deal mortified, thought it a vain delusion to expect any dialogue with him; and therefore entered most gladly into chat, or, rather more appropriately styled, pleasing conference with Lord Clyde, who was her neighbour also at dinner, and who, not exactly knowing how to account for his nephew's extraordinary silence, wished to call her attention from it; although his suspicions were, that, mounted on Pegasus, he had taken flight to Parnassus, where he was composing some beautiful poem in honour of the lovely Adelaide's charms.

The same idea of a poetic flight had taken possession of the mind of Lady Clyde, who doubted not a beautiful effusion of his elegant muse would handsomely apologize for his present apparently uncourteous silence.

Lady Ambrosia, dreading the humiliation of a display of musical talent, in which she sunk to so inferior a class, proposed to Adelaide a ramble into the ground before tea; and as this ramble was augured as auspicious to the almost general wish, it was not only permitted but encouraged;

since no doubt was entertained that Theodore would attend them in it.

Theodore did attend them; and, for some time, a most playful sort of warfare was carried on by him and Lady Ambrosia in the priory grounds; converting flowers into missive weapons, or catching each other with pliant twigs of shrubs, or osiers, or by chains looped in ribbon grass; until, at length, her ladyship exclaiming against the sombre dulness of the ground, proposed going into the public paths in quest of adventures.

Theodore expressed prompt compliance with her wishes; and Adelaide, although not exactly coinciding in opinion of the public ways being pleasanter than the priory grounds, yet made no objection to the proposition, as it came from a guest of Mr. Falkland's; neither would she, by any demur, wear the appearance of resenting conduct she thought most singular; not that she wished Mr. Bouverie to dedicate his attention exclusively to her, while another lady was present to claim a share; but to be treated as a mere non-entity by a man who was confessedly, and under the

sanction of their mutual friends, come into the neighbourhood to be her serious wooer, she thought an extraordinary circumstance; but Theodore she pronounced most strangely altered since his visits at Mrs. Aspenfield's, and her cousin's conduct not exactly what it ought to be.

At length they reached the public ways, where her ladyship chose to ramble through some extensive hop-grounds, where the paths were too narrow to admit the practicability of three persons walking parallel with each other. In the commencement of their regular walk Lady Ambrosia had taken the arm of Theodore, as if mechanically from habit; who immediately offered his other to Adelaide, who not accustomed to such latitude of freedom with the other sex, except in cases where absolute protection required it, and not being pleased with his conduct, politely, though gravely, declined.

The moment the path became too narrow for Adelaide to walk, without inconvenience, abreast with them, and that she drew behind them, they quickened their pace beyond what was easy to her, from

her late extreme fatigue and disuse to pedestrian rambles, and fell into such earnest conference, that they soon not only distanced her completely, but seemed to forget totally that she was in their suite.

But Adelaide forgot not herself; and the moment the meandering of the path had excluded them wholly from her view, she turned back to the stile they had entered the hop-ground by, where she seated herself to await their return, determined not to pursue the shadow of a lover when the substance had moved from her.

Although this was the first moment in Adelaide's life that she had ever been alone in a public road, she felt no alarm, since within her view was a cottage, the owners of which had largely partaken of hers and Mr. Falkland's benevolence; and upon this stile she began to meditate upon what line of conduct the proceedings of Mr. Bouverie called on her to pursue, until a fear suddenly assailed her, that if discovered musing by the apparent lovers they might imagine her thoughts painfully employed by the pangs of disappointment; when instantly she drew forth her ivory

tablet, with intention to sketch some of the surrounding scenery, to evince her composure; but the point of her pencil she found too blunt for that purpose, and not having a knife to remedy that impediment, she wrote on her tablet a rebus, illustrated by numeral figures, which Lady Ambrosia had been teasing her to expound for her, as one a gentleman had made upon her ladyship; and scarcely had she succeeded, when she beheld her truant companions returning to their recollection and to her.

"Oh! Adelaide, what have you been about to use me thus, by causing me such a fright lest we had lost you?" exclaimed Lady Ambrosia, as she rapidly approached, half breathless with her speed, and affecting displeasure at her cousin for her own misdeed.

"About!" returned Adelaide, calmly; "Why *ciphering* it here, child, to oblige you: and my discovery is not very profound, since we wanted not the aid of—I presume—Mr. Bouverie's muse, to learn that in all things U. X. L."

"Do not you aid in flattering me to put me in good humour with you, for playing us such an abominable trick," said Lady Ambrosia, endeavouring to conceal her embarrassment by still affecting displeasure. "What could have induced your extraordinary flight, to terrorize me with apprehension of that Walton, or some fortune-hunter, having carried you off?"

"The flight was yours, Ambrosia, was it not?" Adelaide replied, now quietly closing her tablet: "and not feeling disposed for a solitary ramble, I seated myself in view of protection here; where, on your return from your walk, I should be in readiness to perform the honours of the priory grounds by attending the guests of Mr. Falkland through them to his mansion.— Mr. Bouverie, you have the key; will you have the goodness to readmit us, if you and my cousin have completed your walk?"

Theodore, to hide his awkward embarrassment and confusion, for what he knew not how to extenuate, flew to the door, which the trepidation of conscious impropriety of conduct impeded his promptly

opening; and while he was thus removed from hearing her, Lady Ambrosia, recovering her self-possession, hastily said—

"Oh! Adelaide, I cannot endure you should think I acted reprehensibly by you; so I will confide in you. It was Mr. Bouverie's pique, at your refusing to take his arm, that led him to urge me to walk away from you; and—and—further, but don't betray me to him—apprehending that your high idea of your honour's bond to your uncle's wishes might lead you into becoming his without attachment to him; and therefore, with the whole force of his resistless winning rhetoric, he persuaded me to become his accomplice in putting your regard for him to the test, by making you jealous."

"What a miracle of compliance and friendship you have proved yourself, Ambrosia, to this new ally! But do you take an early opportunity, my kind cousin, of assuring him, from high authority, that you have undertaken a part in this confederacy which can never prove successful. *That* cannot be put to the test which has not been called into existence; and all

your potent charms, Ambrosia, must fail in this enterprize, of introducing the green-eyed monster to disturb the serenity of a bosom that long has cherished fond regard for you."

The door into the priory grounds was now open: Adelaide darted towards it; but at the threshold urbanity chained her until her cousin preceded her in entrance, who now did so in a fit of sullens, which with difficulty she could effect concealment of, at Adelaide's daring to seem to disbelieve what she had condescended to affirm.

The affectionate, guileless Adelaide, shocked, disappointed, and grieved at the too apparent duplicity and perfidy of a relative she sincerely loved, and had so much befriended; with the natural feelings of vanity humbled so completely by this certain dereliction, yet with graceful dignity, rallied each auxiliary to her self-possession to pay civility to her guardian's guests, whom she addressed on various subjects with the cheerful ease of one who had nothing to complain of in the conduct of those she spoke to; but neither

were prompt or happy in their answers—her ladyship from ill-humour more than shame and contrition, while Theodore was mute, or confusedly abstracted, from painful conviction that he was acting most dishonourably, most reprehensibly; but inthralled he knew not how, he was led by infatuation into conduct indefensible, fearing to come to explanations which must overwhelm him with confusion—explanations that, through the arbitrary intervention of his parental friends, would inevitably divide him from a being who had, by inebriating his vanity, led him into its hoodwinked imbecility of judgment, and lured him on to brave every censure of honour's condemnation, to secure to himself the soft, bewitching incense that had fascinated his senses.

"Our apprehensions are not verified," exclaimed Lady Clyde, smiling her rapture at Theodore and his supposed captivator, as the three pedestrians entered the priory drawing-rooms. "'From your protracted stay, my dears, we entertained alarms of Theodore having prevailed on one of the lovely cousins to take flight with him to

Hymen's temple beyond the Tweed, and the other to kindly bear them company."

The blushes of Adelaide and Theodore were conspicuous to all present; but Lady Ambrosia's escaped observation, from not being looked for; and Adelaide, after throwing off her hat and mantle, placed herself in a chair between Lords Beechbrook and Clyde, at the farthest extremity of the room from where Theodore was seated.

Lord Beechbrook, only just waiting to enquire had Adelaide's walk been pleasant, darted off to ask Falkland some suddenly recollected question; when instantly, from some as opportunely remembered piece of information Lord Clyde required, he summoned his nephew to give it to him.

Theodore slunk into the seat he saw his uncle expected him to occupy; and almost immediately after, his lordship, affecting to have his attention arrested by something in the conversation of Lady Clyde and Mrs. Falkland, bounced away to hear it more distinctly; when promptly Adelaide beckoned Lady Ambrosia to come and tenant this abandoned seat, resolved

not to be left thus glaringly singled forth for Theodore's homage by the head-out-of-the-window people about her.

Incessantly Adelaide now talked about the Canterbury balls to her cousin; while Theodore, although now and then drawn in to utter a sentence, was so unhinged, so uncomfortable, and performed his part in dissimulation so awkwardly, that Lady Beechbrook conceiving it must be the intruded presence of Lady Ambrosia which so evidently annoyed him, called the ward of her husband to her, and reproved her for her inadvertence in intruding herself where two young people who were shortly to be united were anxious for every opportunity for tender conversation.

"My cousin called me to join them; she hates to be alone with Mr. Bouverie, she is such a bashful simpleton," replied Lady Ambrosia, with inimitable steadiness.

Falkland, to whom every line of Adelaide's countenance pourtrayed the feelings of her artless mind, saw, beneath the vail of cheerfulness and unusual volubility,

that her bosom was the seat of inquietude; and conjecturing the cause, he fixed a wary eye upon Theodore and Ambrosia; and ere his guests departed every suspicion found conviction, and led him to determine, if the child of his fond care and affection gave him not her confidence on the morrow, he would demand it from her, that the pangs of humiliation, at least, should be removed from her gentle bosom.

Shortly after the Beechbrook party had taken leave, Adelaide, anxious to give her long suppressed feelings uncontrolled indulgence, pleading fatigue, was proceeding to retire, when she stopped to gain her guardian's permission to go to Seaview in the morning to bathe.

"I'll go with you, and take a bath too, I think," said Mrs. Aspenfield.

"And we can breakfast at your house, dear Mrs. Aspenfield," replied Adelaide, coaxingly; and afterwards go to Dover, to get those toys we want for Frederick."

"Heyday, Adelaide! what are all these schemes for to get out of the way?" exclaimed Rosalind, laughing. "My life on

it, you have a presentiment of a formidable question being popped to you to-morrow."

"No, indeed, I have not, Mrs. Falkland," replied Adelaide, endeavouring no to betray emotion; "but I do wish, certainly, to get out of the way a little, not to be always perched at home, as if one expected people to come and perch by one."

"Well, remember I advise you to be prepared for what to-morrow may produce," said Rosalind. "We dine at Beechbrook, and your scampering out of the way in the morning will only hurry matters to a speedier eclaircissement. Ah! I see you are an admirable politician, although so young, my friend."

"To-morrow may produce unexpected events," said Adelaide falteringly; for the intelligence of dining at Beechbrook electrified her with apprehension of a repetition of the past day's pains and mortifications, and compelled her to a hasty adieu, to secure her emotion from detection.

With rapid flight she winged her fleet way to her chamber, where, after the de-

parture of her attached Norah for the night, she called upon all the energies of her mind to combat with and vanquish every lingering tendency to that partiality her duty to her uncle had laid the foundation of, and which for more than a month she had been sedulously toiling to rear to a structure of everlasting tenderness, now Theodore had proved himself a defaulter in honour's sacred code of laws; now he allowed his suit to remain in deceptive form before her guardian and their mutual friends, whilst his inconstant fancy, strayed to another object, was carrying on clandestine measures of earnest wooing; clandestine to all but her to whom his dereliction had been revealed, without one effort of feeling to lessen the mortification prepared for her.

The more Adelaide reflected on the occurrences of the past day, the less she felt the inconstancy of Theodore: he was not the being whom Montagu had pourtrayed him; he was not the being the estimation of her mind could consecrate for the lord of her affection; was not the being her uncle, did he ever return, could regret was

not the one united to her: and as her heart ceased to feel a pang even from mortification, her judgment became more active in its part, and marked out with firmness her plan of action for the morrow.

The subsequent morning Adelaide took her bath at Seaview, and breakfasted there; but as Mrs. Falkland objected to so long a truancy as an expedition to Dover must occasion, she did not press the measure, but adopted other means for protracting her return to the priory by a round of visits to the most remote cottages of her old charitable haunts; whilst Mrs. Aspenfield was engaged arranging some domestic concerns preparatory to her meditated return to her own house.

When Adelaide felt conviction that she ought not longer to trespass on Mrs. Aspenfield's goodness by detaining her at Seaview, she commenced her return to join her; and as De Moreland Castle lay in her way, and having a key to the grounds, she entered them as the nearest as well as pleasantest way to her place of destination; and as they drew near the castle,

Obearn having business with the housekeeper, Adelaide promised to wait for her on the grand terrace whilst she ran in to her; and scarcely had Obearn left her, when she beheld her guardian rapidly advancing to meet her.

"Adelaide, my loved child!"—for child Falkland of late scarcely ever omitted to call her—he said, tenderly taking her hand, and looking with affecting, anxious interest at her, as he drew her hand through his arm, "how do you feel after your bath? I rode over to Seaview to learn how it agreed with you; for I must be a monster of ingratitude was I not all paternal solicitude for you."

"Oh, Sir!" exclaimed Adelaide, subdued by his kindness, to a voice faltering with emotion, "do not believe me a monster of ingratitude, although I quitted your paternal roof this morning without giving to you as your just claim, and as the prompt offering of my affection, my full confidence; but believe me, I meant the day should not go down without my imparting to you a mortifying discovery I have made; but opportunity was all I

waited for, and that your kind solicitude has now yielded me."

And now, with blushing emotion, Adelaide repeated to her tender guardian every incident of her preceding evening's walk.

"And so extraordinary this conduct appears, dear Sir," she gently added, "in a man so universally estimated, and above all, in a brother of Montagu Bouverie's, that I have sometimes, perhaps childishly, been striving to persuade myself that Ambrosia's affirmation was true, of this strange scene being acted to discover was I, indeed, the mere automaton of passive duty."

"No, my love, no!" replied the indignant Falkland; "the scene was no fiction. I have had proof conveyed to me this morning that your cousin is perfidious, Mr. Bouverie dishonourable and inconstant. Mellifont, the grateful Mellifont, knowing how dear the happiness of my child is to me, sought an early conference with me, to inform me 'that he had just beheld, in his morning ramble, Lady Ambrosia and Theodore Bouverie in tender *tête-à-tête* walk; their manner, as they

moved along, in earnest conference, too indicative of mutual love for one moment to be doubted.'"

Falkland's feelings of sympathy were now most agonizingly tortured, from believing, by the mournful look and tearful eyes of his beloved ward, that this dereliction he had given her proof of was painful to her heart.

"My dear, dear guardian!" said Adelaide, well comprehending the eloquent expression of his countenance, "you fear, I perceive, I have formed a tender attachment to this faithless man; but although I yesterday was on the very brink, I believe, of that delusive precipice, he gave me the timely signal, by his conduct, for escape; and to-day I feel full conviction that my escape, my hair's-breadth escape, is certain: but still that I have betrayed to you symptoms of deeply wounded affection is most true; for, Sir, I loved Ambrosia as a sister, and I thought our attachment was mutual. I would not have married Theodore, no never, even had I conceived the most tender affection for him, could I have suspected it would have

pained Ambrosia; but she, without one thought of my feelings, she has lured this man from me; has deceived me, while doing so, by the semblance of anxiety for me; she still seeks to deceive me; and this, dear Sir, is pain and grief to my affectionate, my disappointed heart.

"As this discovery of dereliction has been most providentially made to us, dear Sir, neither you nor I longer consider Mr. Theodore Bouverie as my suitor: but will my ever tender guardian, in another instance of his affectionate indulgence to me, gratify my earnest wish of permitting the discovery we have made to rest for the present in our own bosoms?"

"Convince me, Adelaide, that I shall perform the vigilant duty of a guardian by you; convince me that I shall not degrade your dignity, your surpassing excellence, if I accede to your wish, and you shall promptly find me all compliance."

"Oh! you are always good to me!" exclaimed the grateful Adelaide; "but hear my wishes and their motives, and then you shall convince me should you consider them erroneous.

" Since inconstancy has deprived me of my lover, it strikes to my feelings, as if more consistent with my dignity, for neither my guardian nor myself to be the proclaimers of it, as if we felt indignant disappointment at it; and as my own cousin has been the cause of that inconstancy, and who is well known to be under peculiar obligations to me, I feel more powerfully the restraining delicacy of not being the individual to betray her to censure, and to perhaps the eventual loss, through parental intervention, of the man she has sacrificed so much that is amiable to obtain: and in the course of a few days, the conduct of these now clandestine lovers must betray them to all around; and then my dear guardian can act, can perform all his feelings of propriety and affection for me inspire.

" And as another stimulus to my present wish, dear Sir, although was it now in possibility for the commands of Lord and Lady Clyde this instant to restore the heart of their nephew to me, I would not now accept him; my dear uncle, I well know, would not now desire that I should,

nor could Montagu feel offended with me that I did not; yet I wish to have it proved to my dear uncle, should he ever return to hear it, that I flew not off from my talked of, intended acquiescence in the alliance he designed for me, by the gladly seized upon subterfuge of some slightly awakened jealousy.

"It will inflict, I know, some pangs of mortification upon my pride to have it conceived, even by my friends, that I am humbly waiting for the advances of Mr. Theodore; but my manner to him, devoid of encouragement, though not evincing indignant repellency, as if I was angry at his inconstancy, may counteract that belief, and possibly aid in unclosing the eyes of Lord and Lady Clyde upon existing facts."

Falkland, alarmed at awakening to greater force the unfortunate propensity to jealous flights in the mind of Rosalind, was he, ere conviction came to her own senses of the necessity of it, to close the general expectation of an union between his ward and Theodore Bouverie, more gladly complied with the wish of Adelaide

for temporary passiveness than even his anxiety to oblige her might have alone induced him to, and with affectionate kindness he replied—

"If such a line of conduct is that most genial to the feelings of my dear child, we will, for a day or two, adopt it: but are you sure, my Adelaide, you can sustain scenes like those that yesterday distressed you without betraying feelings which might wound the laudable pride of female excellence to evince?"

"I think you need not fear me, since yesterday I did sustain them when unprepared for what I endured—when the disposition of my heart, beating towards attachment, felt every slight with pain, every apprehension of inconstancy as an impending evil—when without the basis of certainty for conviction, hope would still persist in whispering its delusions; but to-day all is confirmed, and I trust I may prove your toil of twelve long years has been effective; in which, pitying the trembling susceptibilities of my nature, you laboured unremittingly to form round my heart a shield of fortitude to meet the ills

of life; and I hope I do not place presumptuous confidence in my own firmness, if I promise it shall not disgrace my dear preceptor."

"No, Adelaide, sweet child of inherent excellence, you will never, no never, disgrace your preceptor!" exclaimed Falkland, in all the pride of parental exultation.

Now arrived at the portal, and overtaken by Obearn, the guardian and ward separated—Falkland to proceed on his ride, and Adelaide to return to Mrs. Aspenfield's; where, in consequence of a note from Rosalind to her mother, desiring "that Adelaide should not be allowed to fag herself into a death's head, stroaming from cottage to cottage, as there was a large party, she found, to dine at Beechbrook;" the carriage in readiness for Miss Bouverie's return, followed her to the door, and without delay they now returned to Mordaunt Priory.

CHAPTER V.

"WELL," exclaimed Rosalind, in a tone of surprise, the moment Adelaide appeared, "what have you done with the love-stricken Theodore?"

"I have not had power to effect much mischief against him," said Adelaide, as she bent over little Danvers to kiss him, "not having seen him yet to-day."

"You amaze me! Why when I sent your most attentively and judiciously thought of present of fish, my love, to Beechbrook," said Rosalind, "Lady Beechbrook returned me a note of thanks for your most acceptable gift, in which she mentions your Strephon, learning from my messenger of your being at Seaview, was gone in wild speed with Lady Ambrosia to join you there."

"It would have been a rather difficult matter to hunt me out to-day," said Adelaide, painfully blushing, with a thrill from shame at the idea of any thing inducing her to adopt the disingenuousness of evasion, "since mine were mazy rounds."

Rosalind expedited her own toilet this day, that she might superintend what was going forward at Adelaide's; so apprehensive she was of a girl just assuming a more matured style of dress not effecting it with easy grace: but on this occasion she found every thing to approve, nothing she could find a wish to alter.

Falkland was out to so late an hour, he had only just time for his toilet ere they set out for Beechbrook; and when in the carriage, Rosalind inquired where he had been rambling so long.

"I have been over to Hythe barracks with Lord Beechbrook," he replied, "to transform a couple of common sailors into two cavalry officers."

"By what refining process was that transformation effected?" Rosalind inquired.

"By the simple one of change of garments," he replied. "You must know, two officers of the —— hussars took a frolic into their heads of going last night, disguised as fishermen, as near the French coast as prudence would permit, to reconnoitre the encampments there. This morning they returned with a quantity of fine

fish, which the owner of the boat was permitted by them to put into Seaview to dispose of."

"Oh!" exclaimed Adelaide, "then it was some of that identical fish I purchased this morning; for I was much surprised at seeing a pair of uncommonly white hands exhibiting the fish to me, while the man so employed appeared so awkward at the business, so completely out of his element, that I afterwards said to Obearn, 'I was sure that man was a gentleman pretending to sell fish.'"

"Then it was your purchase he was employed carrying home when Lord Beechbrook, wanting to buy the fish, hailed him, and discovered in your fishmonger a brother peer. An explanation ensued, when Lord Beechbrook prevailed on the young adventurer to promise for himself and friend to dine at Beechbrook to-day, to meet one of their lieutenant-colonels, Sir Charles Longuiville, and his bride, the rich Miss Beverly of Yorkshire; but apprehending these adventurers might disappoint him, Lord Beechbrook determined to ride over to Hythe to keep them to their promise,

where they were obliged to go for more appropriate clothing. His lordship encountering me, I accompanied him, and we were compelled to wait a considerable length of time ere the arrival of the boat in which Adelaide's splendid fisherman returned to Hythe."

"Have these adventurers no name, Augustus?" demanded Rosalind.

"One is a Captain Clayton, the other a *ci-devant* devoted of Lady Ambrosia's, as her ladyship has informed us, Lord Aberavon."

"Perhaps, then, her ladyship is the attraction which draws him to Beechbrook to-day, after a sleepless night spent in a boat at sea."

"Possibly, Rosalind," returned Falkland, with an arch smile. "But pray, Adelaide, how came you to send his lordship home with your purchase?"

"I did not particularly send him, Sir," said Adelaide, blushing, "for it was the man I paid for it whom I requested to send it home for me; when this disguised peer volunteered his services, saying 'he would run instantly with it, if I would favour him

with my name and place of residence;' and I was proceeding to do so, when Obearn, considering him an odd sort of flighty mortal, advised my sending a note by him to Mrs. Aspenfield; so with a pencil I wrote one on a slip of paper, requesting Mrs. Aspenfield to forward the fish to the priory, for Mrs. Falkland to dispose of as she judged proper."

"Which slip of paper you most obligingly gave him open," said Rosalind, smiling, "and thereby conveyed to his lordship that information his alertness was assumed for, your name and residence; and having obtained her name, Augustus, did he impart to Lord Beechbrook for whom he was so singularly employed?"

"No, nothing further than that 'he had promised the purchaser of his burden to take it home for her; and being the most beautiful girl he had ever beheld, he would not break his word with her for ten thousand worlds.'"

They now reached Beechbrook, and the moment they entered the hall one of the female domestics informed Adelaide, "that Lady Ambrosia requested to see her in

her dressing-room ere she joined the company."

With a palpitating heart our sensitive heroine obeyed this summons, assured this requested interview was for the purpose of explanation and apology for her own conduct; but soon Adelaide's hopes of the returning ingenuousness of her cousin were disappointed: she found her ladyship enveloped in all the anxieties of the toilet, not having completed her adornment, and wishing Adelaide to give some beautifying completion to the arrangement of her hair."

"Dear, how well you look to-day, Adelaide!" exclaimed her ladyship, in a tone betraying no satisfaction at perceiving it. "I really think it is owing to that lovely pearl necklace, since nothing is so becoming as a pearl necklace with emerald clasps. Oh! I wish I had one, it would so exactly suit my complexion."

"That wish can be soon realized," said Adelaide, composedly; "only intimate it to Mr. Bouverie, and a pearl necklace with emerald clasps will be one of his first presents to his lovely bride."

"Pshaw!" returned her disappointed

ladyship, highly disconcerted. "Mr. Bouverie's presents to his bride can be nothing to my wish of having such a necklace to wear to-day, as, as—— to tell you the truth, Lord Aberavon is to dine here to-day, who introduced himself to my guardian on purpose to be invited hither, knowing I was at Beechbrook."

"Surely," returned Adelaide, "Lord Aberavon can only be an object of indifference to you now. After such encouragement to Mr. Theodore Bouverie, you can make it no question which of your two lovers is the favoured one; unless, indeed, you are more ambitious than I suspect you to be, and allow the charms of the coronet to allure you from the path of constancy."

"Nay," said Lady Ambrosia, so piqued to the very essence of her vanity by this truism implied of her having only two lovers to select from, that she sustained this unequivocally betrayed knowledge of her perfidy without a blush, "my only inducement to inconstancy may be to leave one of my two lovers for her who long has coveted him."

"That will be an innovation of kindness in your conduct to that poor lovelorn damsel, certainly," said Adelaide, with a provoking smile of invincible good temper.

"But how we have wandered away from an avowed wish of mine!" said Lady Ambrosia, recovering her serenity to pursue her project. "Dear, dear Adelaide! you that are always so complying and so kind to me, surely you will not refuse me what I have absolutely set my heart upon, to let me wear your necklace to-day? Having no other ornament on, it cannot destroy the consistency of your dress, and you always look best without adornments."

"I am sorry, Ambrosia, I cannot comply with your wish, since Mrs. Falkland herself selected this necklace for me to-day, and was I to take it off she would have just cause to be offended with me."

"The deuce take Mrs. Falkland!" exclaimed Lady Ambrosia, in a tone of anger; for having given all the credit of Adelaide's improved looks to the influence of a beautiful necklace, not to her progress in recovery from recent fatigue in anxious watching, wished most ardently to transplant this

increaser of charms to her own finely rounded throat.

The dress of Lady Ambrosia was now completed, but not until after innumerable supplications from the timid Adelaide, who feared the exhibition of an *entrée* before the whole assembled company, could Lady Ambrosia be prevailed upon to quit the contemplation of her beauteous self in the reflecting glasses.

"Do not be so terrorized, child," said Lady Ambrosia, as they approached the drawing-room suite; "we shall manage vastly well, with excellent effect, as my sisters always do by choice when the guests are all assembled.—We enter arm in arm, I leaning on you, child: this mutual support looks sweet *amitié*, and awakens interest."

It being early in September, the weather yet being extremely warm, the doors were all open to admit air, and the fair cousins had to pace up the long antichamber and longer saloon into the great drawing-room, in full view, given by immense folding doors to each apartment, to all the company: the one with the flush of se-

cured and expected conquest mantling her cheeks, and adding brilliancy to her languishing eyes, while with the mien of exulting vanity she moved along in the presenting style of a professed and conscious beauty; the other, blushing the brightest tints of retiring modesty, walked with downcast eyes, in the graceful movement of unassured diffidence, neither demanding nor expecting the eye of admiration to rest on her.

But an eye of admiration, which least of all others she could expect, made rest upon her. The surpassing symmetry of her lovely form attracted the attention of Theodore Bouverie, in this long promenade, from her cousin, and mentally he ejaculated—

"How transcendently beautiful she is! Oh! who could think a casket of such rare perfection was formed to contain a heart of apathy!—feelings that only seek assimilation with the pulse of formal, frigid duty!"

But a glance, shot from beneath the silken fringe of Lady Ambrosia's love-instructed, eloquent eyes, recalled his truant admiration to her exclusively; and in her blaze of charms, her enthusiastic attachment, her

melting tenderness, her enrichment of mental treasures, her fascinating letters, which first allured him to contemplate her perfections, all recollection of the being he was nominally addressing was now lost.

Adelaide, having paid her compliments to Lady Beechbrook, took her seat in the spot she considered as obviously the most intricate for the accommodating friends of both parties to send Theodore Bouverie to perform purgatory in; and most judicious she considered her manœuvre, when the two eldest of Lord Beechbrook's children, Lord Ashcombe and Lady Mary, the one nine and the other seven years old, requested her permission to sit on the chair with her; when both so grateful for this indulgence, they began to do their utmost, in their artless, though lowly uttered, strains, to entertain her; and so monopolized her attention, that she saw not the dexterity with which Lady Ambrosia contrived to attract Lord Aberavon and Theodore Bouverie to seats beside her; and while she occasionally talked to his lordship as an old acquaintance, still by snatched, short sentences to Theodore fascinated him to her

side; while Lord and Lad yClyde fidgeted in vain amazement at such inexplicable proceedings.

The circle assembled, beside the inmates of the mansion and the family of Mordaunt Priory, consisted of Sir Charles and Lady Longuiville, Lord Aberavon, and Captain Clayton.

Lady Longuiville, from having just made her first appearance at the quarters of her husband's regiment, was styled in the neighbourhood a bride, though three months married, and who being an immensely wealthy heiress, of age, and in possession of all her riches but her mother's ample jointure, no one wondered at the handsome, elegant Sir Charles Longuiville uniting himself to her; although her personal attractions were so inconsiderable, that in general she was pronounced a plain woman, but withal so highly informed, so unaffectedly good humoured and captivating in her manners, that all who were interested for Sir Charles hoped he might, as he deserved, be most happy with her, since he had sacrificed his own feelings, his own strong repugnance to the alliance,

to provide for seven brothers and sisters, thrown portionless on his affection by their father's infatuated fondness leaving their fortunes all in the power of their mother; who, shortly after she became a widow, married an unprincipled spendthrift, who seized upon every thing, and ruined her younger children.

Lord Aberavon, at this period, had just entered his twenty-fourth year, and was so extremely handsome and fascinating in his manners, that he well justified the violent passion Lady Ambrosia Leyburn had long cherished for him; and thus captivating, his libertine propensities had been so encouragingly successful as to lead him into becoming a professed declaimer against marriage.

Captain Clayton was a fine, martial looking young man, who constantly believed himself in love; yet he always eat with an excellent appetite, slept profoundly, and wore perpetually the happy smile of mental sunshine.

At length the last of the expected guests arrived, Lady Caroline Wilmot, a most respected neighbour, a widow, just receding

from the bloom of life, and who apologised for her late arrival in being detained by her arrangements for going to Ramsgate the succeeding day; and at the moment of her ladyship's entrance, Lady Clyde, conceiving Lord Ashcombe and Lady Mary prevented Theodore from approaching Adelaide, took this opportunity of summoning them to a conference with her.

Lord Aberavon promptly perceiving that Lady Mary had left Miss Bouverie's fan she had been playing with on the ottoman at her feet, now darted to the prize, which, in his graceful restoration of, afforded him a long wished for opportunity of taking a seat by her, whom he knew not was under any talked of engagement with another, and whom, from the time he had seen in the morning, his heart was so full of, that from the moment of her entering the drawing-room it had been at strong warfare with his disinclination to matrimony, which was just beginning to yield to attractions which could only be obtained by the total overthrow of all former determinations, when this lucky restoration of her fan enabled him to speak to the lovely fascinator for

whom his heart first beat with a serious, honourable passion.

Adelaide's fan being as gracefully received as it was presented, his lordship proceeded, with all the seductive charms and eloquence he could boast, to apologise for assuming the manners of the disguise he had worn in the morning, frankly confessing it was to obtain information of who she was; and while he was so employed, Lord Clyde was mentally reprobating his nephew for an indolent, incomprehensible booby, who deserved to lose the sweetest young creature in existence, who was ready to become his wife.

At length dinner was announced, when, in defiance of the conspicuous gesticulations which Lord Clyde had angrily recourse to for arousing his nephew to the conduct of a lover, Theodore permitted Lord Aberavon to usurp his post; and the amazed, chagrined, and half awaking uncle beheld Adeliade seated at dinner between this intruding young peer and Lord Beechbrook; his nephew, as in the drawing-room, a fixture by the side of Lady Ambrosia Leyburn.

All the party who chose fish being helped to it, Adelaide's present became the theme of general commendation; when Lord Beechbrook asked her, "What could have put it into her head, whom he felt conviction had never made a purchase of the kind before, to send them such a noble supply of what they else must have contrived to dine without?"

"Why, my lord," said the blushing Adelaide, "my attention was attracted by a beautiful boat I saw running into shore—"

"Or was it not by what the boat contained, Adelaide?" asked his lordship, archly.

"By intuition, possibly, it was," she replied, with increasing bloom, but affecting not to apply his meaning as he intended; "for I soon perceived it contained turbot and lobsters in abundance; and remembering to have heard Lady Beechbrook yesterday regret, 'that from the illness of her own fisherman she had yet been unable to procure any good fish for Lord and Lady Clyde,' I thought, in such an opportunity afforded me, her ladyship would

consider it no presumption in me for once to cater for her table."

"Presumption!" repeated his lordship, with grateful fervour. "No, Adelaide, it was like all your actions, full of sweet, affecting kindness to your friends."

"And pray," continued his lordship, who, like Montagu Bouverie, delighted in seeing her blush, "may I ask how did you contrive to get your fish home?"

"Why, my lord," she replied, endeavouring to rally up against his lordship's *badinage*, "there was a remarkably obliging man amid the crew, who carried it for me."

"And what did you give him for his trouble?"

"Simply my thanks."

"Nay, but rely upon it he had some higher recompence in view. Mankind are selfish animals. What think you, Lord Aberavon?"

"Why, although every man, even those in the lowest stations, must deem it a happiness to serve Miss Bouverie," returned Lord Aberavon, blushing as deeply as Adelaide herself, "yet I perfectly agree with

your lordship in thinking this man was not quite so disinterested as the lovely purchaser of your turbot imagined."

Lady Ambrosia was electrified. She beheld a blush on the cheeks of Lord Aberavon, awakened by some sympathetic reference to her cousin. "What could it mean?" Her vanity took alarm, but that alarm was speedily superseded by one of greater magnitude; for Lady Caroline Wilmot invited her, from her station across the table, to accompany her, on the morrow, to Ramsgate; and Lord Beechbrook, without a question to her, eagerly accepted the invitation for her.

"I cannot be ready, I fear, for so speedy a departure," faltered out Lady Ambrosia.

"That is impossible, after your *abundant, your noble supply* of finery, Lady Ambrosia, for Canterbury races; therefore I take upon me to answer for you to Lady Caroline that you will be ready to have the honour of attending her to a place you have long expressed much anxiety to go to," said Lord Beechbrook, gravely, whose suspicions of facts had been awakened since the arrival of Adelaide at Beechbrook; and

making annotations upon his ward's dismay and Theodore's emotion on this invitation to Ramsgate, he promptly determined that go she should.

Lady Ambrosia had power only to bow a sort of reluctant acquiescence to the half offended Lady Caroline, and with difficulty could sustain her place at table; and the moment the adjournment of the ladies to the drawing-room afforded her opportunity she retreated from the party; when Adelaide too, fearing embarrassing questions from Lady Clyde, winged her way to the nursery, to visit her adoring young friends there.

CHAPTER VI.

When, at length, Adelaide deemed it necessary to return to the drawing-room, she found Lady Longuiville and Mrs. Falkland delighting their female auditors by the magic of sweet sounds; for her ladyship, as well as Rosalind, was an accomplished musician, who sung to admiration.

Soon after Adelaide appeared, Mrs. Falkland requested her beloved pupil to sing a Scotch ballad for Lady Clyde.

"I promised her ladyship you would sing before the men join us; after that I know I might, with equal probability of success, request of you to embrace them all to oblige her. Come, then, my Adelaide, and for the credit of your poor preceptress summon *coraggio*, I prithee."

"I will make my attempt," said Adelaide, smiling, as she turned over the pages of a music book; "for although at the bar of judgment, I feel secure of mercy from my present jurors."

Adelaide now sung to Mrs. Falkland's

beautifully chaste accompaniment, and beyond Rosalind's expectations; each individual heard her; and having heard her, the wish became powerful and impatient for hearing her again.

"And won't you let my lord hear you? won't you allow Theodore that transport, my dear Miss Bouverie?" anxiously demanded Lady Clyde.

"Oh! never mind lords or commons at present, dear Lady Clyde," exclaimed Rosalind; "since she has, in allowing any stranger to hear her, achieved a valorous exploit, sufficient to boast of this month; and let us not alarm her by mention of future greater demands upon her prowess, or we shall never get her through her present performance."

Adelaide again sung, and, from augmenting courage, with increased fascination; yet, unconsciously, she had an auditor who would have terrified her voice from its enchanting sweetness had she known that Lord Aberavon had entered whilst she was singing, and had, guided by the dumb shew of Lady Beechbrook, found a secret station to listen and be-

come entranced; but at length, in turning a page in her song, she caught a glimpse of his lordship, reflected from a glass, when instantly the song was suspended, and she flung herself upon the bosom of Rosalind, in trembling dismay at the temerity she had unconsciously practised.

"I should be grieved to see you a dasher, who had effaced bashfulness as an antediluvian appendage from your mind and manners," said Rosalind, smiling; "but I do wish we could contrive to infuse a little more of the spirit of becoming courage into your sensitive composition, my dear Adelaide."

"Oh! no, Mrs. Falkland!" exclaimed Lord Aberavon, in a tone of the most animated enthusiasm; "wish not for alteration where all is resistless fascination."

"But if our fascinations are packed up in a strong box, what are their uses?" demanded Rosalind, smiling at his betraying raptures. "For instance, does not a fascinating voice become inutile when the lip of timidity shuts in its sweet sounds from every ear?"

"Miss Bouverie's domestic circle will

find no impeding timidity to despoil their ears of their coveted gratification," resumed his lordship; "and those who may be most deeply interested relative to her may possibly think the domestic circle should be the sphere for her fascinations to shine most brightly in."

"Then your lordship does not approve of exhibitions, I perceive; and Lady Longuiville and I must sing no more but for our husband's 'own vouchsafed ear,' if we wish for the approbation of Lord Aberavon."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Falkland; yours and Lady Longuiville's acquaintance with the world has taught you, most happily, how, whilst you charm by your accomplishments, to rivet the approbation, by the dignified propriety which is the captivating accompaniment of all you do: but Miss Bouverie, at sixteen, in all the sweet, retiring grace of juvenile timidity, is exactly what each parent must exult at in his child; what each man, who wished to be a happy husband, must rejoice to behold in the early life of her he sought to prove the blessing of his connubial days."

"And after such an eulogium upon juvenile bashfulness, and from such an *elogisté!*" exclaimed Mrs. Falkland, "who can hope to coax, or decoy, or preach my sensitive *elève* out of the shell of her trembling timidity? So, my friends and fellow sufferers, never more can you expect to hear her dulcet strains until she learns lessons in that school which has so happily bronzed the deportment of more experienced fascinators, like Lady Longuiville and Rosalind Falkland."

Tea commenced and was ended ere Lady Ambrosia rejoined the party; then card tables were occupied, and Lady Longuiville and Mrs. Falkland again charmed the ears of their auditors by their surprising melody; but no Theodore appeared in all that lapse of time, to the increasing perplexity and dismay of Lord and Lady Clyde, who saw his place usurped by Lord Aberavon, who, though drawn much into the conversation of Lady Ambrosia and Captain Clayton upon past gay scenes at Roscoville Abbèy, they yet developed as a commencing suitor, who, in trembling hope, was seeking a prize which the trump

of fame had not yet informed him was destined for another.

As the moment for the dispersion of the party drew near, Theodore entered; when his uncle and aunt anxiously hastened to him to inquire the cause of so extraordinary an absence.

The impatient, unsettled look of Theodore as they spoke—his hurried reply, "that he had been engaged writing," fully accounted to his anxious relatives for the cause of his injudicious absence, but did not satisfy them; for although they now believed an exquisitely beautiful poem would flatteringly apologise to Adelaide for her lover's truancy, still they thought it strange to use these precious moments in writing eulogiums on her beauty, which he might have better disposed of in winning that beauty to be his.

Lord Clyde had been before disposed to consider great geniuses, in general, strange incongruous animals, but here was full conviction that his opinion was not unfounded; and he fervently prayed the folly of superlative genius might not find an illustration in the prize being won by a flat-

teringly assiduous lover, while the poet was rhyming and chiming upon the enthusiasm of his passion, the transcendency of his mistress's charms.

At length the moment for the departure of the Mordaunt Priory party arrived.

"Good night, Ambrosia: I wish you all your heart can desire to meet at Ramsgate," said Adelaide, kindly, to her cousin; who only, with a tremulous pressure of her hand, made a response.

But Theodore afforded Adelaide no opportunity of bidding him the adieu of urbanity, which was reiterating from all, since he vanished the moment the Falklands arose to depart; and Lord Aberavon was the attentive escort of our heroine to the carriage.

The moment the coach moved on, Rosalind burst forth with a degree of indignant vehemence her companions believed ungenial even to her ardent nature in execration of Theodore Bouverie, on whom, she declared, "if Falkland threw away their darling Adelaide, she would separate herself from him the very next hour."

"Why I thought, my love," said Falkland, "you were all eager anxiety for the match?"

"Do not irritate me, Augustus, by this cool, provoking irony, for I honestly confess I am in a most savage humour; and if you exasperate me I may possibly play the Amazon, and hostilely attack you for being of the same species with that demure hypocrite whom we degraded our darling Adelaide, sullied her consequence, in allowing a shadow to dawn upon a possibility we could sacrifice her to: and as to Lady Ambrosia Leyburn! that ungrateful viper! if she is ever invited within my doors again, I shall walk out of them never to return: that's all, good people!"

Falkland took the hand of his wife, and pressed it with affectionate approbation; when Rosalind, overpowered by this tender proof of sympathy in sentiment, burst into tears, and sobbed as violently as she had talked.

"My dear, kind, affectionate Mrs. Falkland!" exclaimed Adelaide, with tender, grateful emotion, "throw not away, I be-

seech you, one precious tear of yours upon that which deserves nothing half so estimable."

"Adelaide, my dear, dear Adelaide!" sobbed Rosalind, drawing her to her bosom, and pressing her to it with maternal fervour, "speak, tell me with that ingenuousness which inspires your every thought, does this man's shameful dereliction inflict no pang in your gentle bosom? for then my indignation will only be indignation; but now it swells in my heart with something that makes me feel almost a maniac."

"Mrs. Falkland," said Adelaide, "I knew the changed sentiments of Mr. Bouverie ere I went this day to Beechbrook; you cannot then disbelieve me when I affirm my heart feels now no pang at this dereliction but from seeing you so agitated."

"Since, since this is really the case," replied Rosalind, "I shall feel more reconciled:—reconciled, indeed! how I rave! for I mean I shall feel beside myself with rapture at your escape from such an unworthy object, such a paltry match! But, oh! how I do wish I could see Adelaide a

bride before her perfidious, ungrateful cousin! Yet, at any rate, we are pretty certain of one reprisal. Her *beautiful* ladyship, who was expiring for him, could not win Lord Aberavon to offer her his hand; while, if I am not egregiously mistaken, Adelaide will have the triumphant power of wearing his lordship's coronet ere long, if she pleases. The manner in which he spoke of her timidity assures me his is serious admiration. What said his lordship to you, Falkland, in your earnest conference just as we were departing?"

"Why I grieve to tell your sanguine expectations that he did not solicit my consent to his addressing my ward; yet, not to crush your hopes, my Rosalind, or bring your penetration into disesteem, I acknowledge I do believe the offer of this coronet is on its way to Adelaide; since his lordship, with much suspicious agitation, eagerly entreated me to tell him, 'If the intelligence just conveyed to him in positive terms, by Lady Ambrosia Leyburn, of Mr. Bouverie being the accepted lover of Miss Bouverie, was true? That he had before conceived this gentleman the

serious captive of Lady Ambrosia; but that her ladyship's affirmation was delivered so absolutely, he ought not to disbelieve what his heart recoiled from the conviction of, and his senses refused to credit.'"

"Adelaide! Adelaide!" exclaimed Mrs. Falkland, "after such a false assertion, to increase the eclat of her triumph in luring your declared lover from you, can you, will you say again that Lady Ambrosia has an amiable heart?"

"My dear Mrs. Falkland, I will now only say I hope Ambrosia will not force me to withdraw my affection from her, as a being undeserving of my love. When she returns from Ramsgate, I will ask her why she told what strictly is not true to Lord Aberavon. Not that I wish his lordship to become my lover, since it would be to no purpose; for although Ambrosia was pleased with him, I very well know, from all she has told me of him, that I never could esteem him."

"My dear Adelaide, be not fastidious, I entreat you," said Mrs. Falkland, eagerly.

"And, my dear Adelaide, do not allow

his captivating exterior to win your fancy, if you know any thing to condemn him for," said Falkland; "neither allow a wish to retaliate mortification upon your ungrateful cousin lure you to accept him against the firm impulsion of your heart—the decision of your judgment. From a combination of causes, I see yours will be no task of difficulty to find a husband; your only puzzle will be to choose the most judiciously."

They now arrived at the priory; but Rosalind would not allow a separation to seek repose until she had learned from Adelaide all she knew relative to Theodore's evident inconstancy; and that Falkland, her mother, and herself, discussed the subject of the mortification preparing for Adelaide by her ungrateful cousin, and arranged the steps they should, on the morrow, pursue, to avoid that humiliation: but all their midnight consultations proved time and labour lost; for when the morrow came, the intelligence awaited them of Theodore Bouverie and Lady Ambrosia having eloped in the night for Scotland.

Lord Beechbrook came himself to im-

part this information gently to his favourite Adelaide, and to entreat Falkland to go in his professional character to Lady Clyde, who was so shocked and afflicted by her darling nephew having so infatuatedly consigned himself, as she believed, to wedded misery and bitter repentance, that they feared serious indisposition would be the consequence.

Lord Beechbrook, to his utter amazement, found the family at Mordaunt Priory much better prepared for the intelligence he conveyed than that at Beechbrook had been, although his own suspicions had been so forcibly awakened as to lead to his determination of sending his ward to Ramsgate; and Adelaide's conduct upon the mortification prepared for her was so mildly dignified, that his lordship found more than ever to admire in her, more than ever to wonder at and condemn in the infatuated Theodore.

As there was nothing through the agitation of any individual to detain Falkland after the disclosure of this elopement, he hastened to Beechbrook to prescribe for Lady Clyde, to whom he recommend-

ed immediate change of scene, and constant travelling for some little time, to avert a severe nervous attack which seemed to menace her; when Lord Clyde proposing an expedition to Ireland to visit a beloved friend of her ladyship's, whom she had not seen for years, Lady Clyde gratefully acceded to the proposition, and accordingly they set out that morning.

CHAPTER VII.

In the course of this morning, as Adelaide was pensively seated at her work, meditating upon the reprehensible conduct of the fugitives, and how little they merited happiness in that state they had transgressed against every precept of honour and gratitude to hurry into, when the Miss Birch's were announced, and Mary and Eliza entered, who scarcely ever having visited at Mordaunt Priory, the motive of their calling now could not be misconceived: and as our heroine was perfectly aware of her being the present attraction, she took an early opportunity of asking them, with a steady composure indicating nothing of that agitation they came to seek for, "if there was any particularly *new* news in circulation at Seaview?"

"N—o—o, n—o—t, I be—lieve; none very particular," replied the Misses, in a hesitating manner, which plainly indicated that there was.

"Why, surely, my cousin's elopement

must prove a theme for conversation there?"

"Yes; as you mention it, we may confess the whole neighbourhood rings of nothing else," said the fair Eliza.

"Nothing else is talked of," cried Miss Mary, "except Lord Aberavon's despair."

"Lord Aberavon never addressed Lady Ambrosia," replied Mrs. Falkland; "if he had, she would never have accepted Theodore Bouverie."

"Why, so we say," returned Miss Mary; "but the Woodehouses say they met Lady Ambrosia in their walks yesterday, who took occasion to tell them Lord Aberavon was to dine at Beechbrook; and told it in such a triumphant way, they could not but understand he was going there on her account; which certainly looks true, as his lordship has obtained leave for the removal of his troop from Hythe to Seaview barracks."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Falkland. "And pray is it known how his lordship's despair affects him?"

"Not exactly, Ma'am," replied Miss Eliza; "as he has not yet marched in

with his troop. But you know, I suppose, Miss Bouverie, that Lydia Woodehouse was in all Lady Ambrosia's secrets?"

"I only know," said Adelaide calmly, "she told the Miss Woodehouses, and you too, I believe, Miss Birches, that I purposed a compliance with Lord De Moreland's wishes by accepting Mr. Bouverie."

"Certainly she did," returned Miss Eliza, amazed and disconcerted at perceiving Adelaide looked neither crest-fallen nor broken-hearted from the triumph of her cousin: "and we had a sort of bet with her ladyship, since Canterbury races, that she would be married before you—indeed, —but this is between ourselves—Lydia Woodehouse dared her ladyship to the step she has taken, 'as a fine, dashing thing, to disappoint Miss Bouverie of being so preposterously dutiful;' and Mrs. Crow wrote to Lady Leyburn about what her daughter was projecting; when her ladyship wrote to Lady Ambrosia, highly to approve her plan, and to say 'she could guaranty for Mr. Theodore's being presumptive heir to an earldom.'"

"Fie! Eliza, you ought not to betray

what Lydia confided to us," said Miss Mary, much vexed that she had not had the pleasure of betraying it herself.

"Why, 'tis no use to conceal it longer; when it was so, we rigidly kept the secret."

"That was very laudable indeed!" said Mrs. Falkland, ironically. "And pray, may I now ask, or is that a secret, to be guarded while it is any use to tell it, when is Miss Lydia Woodehouse to be united to Captain Walton?"

Miss Eliza turned pale as death, and with difficulty preserved herself from falling off her seat.

"There is nothing in that report, I can assure you, Mrs. Falkland," said Miss Mary. "Indeed, I know to an absolute certainty Captain Walton has no thoughts of her; although she has done every thing that prudence could sanction, and more too, if I may speak without apparent ill-nature, to get him for a husband: but she is an agreeable rattle, who will not marry in a hurry, however he may admire, and so I tell them all."

"Add snake to rattle, omit agreeable, and I will read after you," said Rosalind.

"We came over," said Miss Eliza, in a tremulous tone, anxious to change the subject, "to tell you there is to be a sort of theatrical *mélange* this evening in the great room at the New Inn, and that all the world will be there. But, perhaps, after what has just happened, you may not like to go."

"I know of nothing that has happened to prevent our attending the party we formed with Ladies Beechbrook and Longueville, to go to this *mélange*. Has there, Mrs. Falkland?" said Adelaide, with the most provoking serenity.

"Certainly nothing, my love," said Rosalind, who now ordered refreshments for the Miss Birches; and as it was a long walk from their home to the priory, they sat a considerable time to rest; during which period Adelaide conducted herself with such calm, cheerful steadiness, that they began to feel, at length, a secret conviction of Lady Ambrosia having had no triumph at all, since Miss Bouverie could never have meant to accept a man, through duty to her absent uncle, whom she evidently cared not for: but this conviction

they kindly determined to lock within their own bosoms, since they wished the world to believe this great beauty, the pride and boast of Falkland, who had slighted their sisters, had sustained the reported humiliation.

Very shortly after the Miss Birches made their exit, Lady Beechbrook arrived, her sorrowful friends having just left her to commence their journey to Ireland; and her ladyship's meeting with Adelaide was that of a kind, tender friend, whose heart was pained at a circumstance arising to wound the feelings of a being she regarded.

After the elopement and the distress of Lady Clyde had been discussed, Mrs. Falkland informed her ladyship of the visit of the Miss Birches, and of all the ill-nature evident through it.

Lady Beechbrook was highly indignant, and hoped Adelaide found herself equal to what her answer to these misses had implied—her appearing at the *mélange* that evening, to convince the ill-natured they had no cause for exultation; since Lady Ambrosia Leyburn had inflicted no pangs

of subduing mortification upon the amiable, the generous being whom she was under the most incalculable obligations to.

Adelaide felt not a doubt, while supported by her own kind friends, of being able to sustain her part in disappointing those who wished her to appear subdued; and, as Mrs. Falkland had announced to Lady Longueville her intention of taking an early opportunity of calling upon her ladyship, it was thought expedient, by this little convention assembled at Mordaunt Priory, not to postpone that visit, lest it might lead to a supposition of the unexpected event of the night having unhinged any part of the family so much as to prevent the others of it from remembering the demands of *politesse*.

Adelaide not feeling inclined to form one of this morning party, Lady Beechbrook and Mrs. Falkland set out to Lady Longueville's, whom, with Sir Charles, they found at home; and their visit was approaching to its termination, when Lord Aberavon entered, who blushed as deeply on seeing Mrs. Falkland as if Adelaide herself had been there; so unexpected was

his meeting any of the family, after all he had just heard of the extreme distress the recent elopement had just occasioned at Beechbrook and Mordaunt Priory.

His lordship, however, hesitated not to apologize to Lady Beechbrook for not having paid his respects to her at Beechbrook that morning, and to Rosalind for not having returned the visit of Mr. Falkland: for his lordship chose to construe Falkland's accidentally accompanying Lord Beechbrook to the barracks at Hythe as a visit.

"But I have been engaged all the morning upon regimental duty, marching my troop to Seaview," continued his lordship; "and my appearance here is still my duty in waiting upon my commanding officer, and to make the acknowledgments of my gratitude for Sir Charles's kind permission for the removal of my troop to Seaview, which is a station I infinitely prefer to Hythe."

The fair visitors soon after arose to depart, when his lordship had the happiness of hearing, in some arrangements for the party assembling at the house of Mrs. As-

penfield, as being the most approximate to the New Inn, that Miss Bouverie was to be at Seaview that evening.

The toilet of Adelaide was attended to with the most anxious solicitude by Mrs. Falkland, who was highly gratified on perceiving the event of the night had not diminished the exquisite loveliness of Adelaide's aspect, who, at the appointed time, attended her kind friends to meet a most punctual party at the house of Mrs. Aspenfield; from whence they proceeded to the place of the evening's exhibition, where soon wonder and alarm filled the bosom of every envious miss when they beheld Lord Aberavon, with no visible trace of distraction or abstraction, take his permanent station at the side of Adelaide, and talk unceasingly to her during every interval of the performance.

But although Lord Aberavon talked devotedly to Adelaide every possible moment he could seize, yet she did not converse exclusively with him, as if entered the lists of serious wooing, or even commencing flirtation with him, since her attention was ready for every one who

could have a demand upon it; and more calm, composed, and collected she had never appeared; and not even envy had the daring to utter that her cheerfulness was overacting, or that she was striving to forget her mortification in aiming at the captivation of Lord Aberavon's heart.

But while Adelaide attracted attention, she did not totally absorb it; the contest of the Misses Woodehouse and Birch to monopolize the assiduities of Captain Walton occupied much observation; and all saw how inutile were the grave looks of the fathers to discountenance this libertine, while the mothers, in *rivalité* for their daughters' charms, encouraged, most glaringly, this man of vice, who, upon his part, in affected negligence of them all, made a complete exhibition of his power over them, for the purpose of elevating his consequence in the mind of the fascinating Adelaide, whom, more than ever, he this evening languished to obtain.

So evident, at length, became the ardent admiration of Walton for Miss Bouverie to all his infatuated wooers, so conspicuous

his indifference to them, which to Eliza Birch assumed the tone of contemptuous disgust, so evident to herself, that, not able to sustain her feelings, she at last fainted; when she was left by the miscreant, who was well aware of the causes which operated in such an effect, to the care of her terrorized father and Mr. Mellifont, to bear her thence, and convey her home; while Mrs. Birch, resolute not to leave the field to the Woodehouse rivals, maintained her post with her other daughters as long as the performance lasted, affecting to think Eliza's indisposition had merely arisen from the heat of the room.

Mrs. Aspenfield having engaged the whole of the party she formed one of to a *petit soupé* at her house, they all adjourned to it the moment the exhibition terminated; where they spent their time most pleasantly in her hospitable mansion, and where Lord Aberavon, each passing moment, finding stronger conviction awakening in his mind that the sensation agitating his heart for the as perfectly minded as beautifully formed Adelaide was pure, ardent, unalienable affection, deter-

mined to become, without delay, her serious wooer; and, would his auspicious fate permit, what hitherto he had shrunk from the idea of, a husband; and as the husband of Adelaide, a happy, enviable one; the respected of society, an honour to his exalted rank.

Lady Beechbrook had just made a proposition for ordering the carriages, when Mellifont, pale with agitation and despair, and breathless with the speed of gratitude's anxiety, arrived, to implore Falkland to accompany him to save the life of an old friend, Doctor Birch, who had fallen into a fit of a most alarming nature.

The humanity of Falkland required no incentive to impel him to give his aid in restoring the health or averting the death of a fellow-being; but the estimable Doctor Birch, the father of so numerous an unportioned family, made humanity assimilate with terrorized anxiety; and Falkland, seizing the first conveyance which drove up to the door, hastened to Doctor Birch's, where not even the skill of Falkland, though procured so speedily, could efficiently avail. The suspended faculties

of the worthy doctor were only reanimated to call forth lamentations for the overthrow his senses had partially sustained, through a shock his parental feeling, his pride of honour had most cruelly, most unexpectedly received, in the direful discovery, which could no longer effect concealment, of a child's frailty; and scarcely, at morning's dawn, had the feeling-hearted Falkland returned to his home, and announced to the sympathising partner of his bosom "that the mental faculties of Dr. Birch were most probably shook for ever by the frenetic confession proclaimed by the frail Eliza before several of the servants, in the temporary mania of jealous irritation at barbarous contempt, that Walton had betrayed her innocence, and that she was in that state which could not long effect concealment of her shame," ere he was summoned again to this distracted family to yield his assistance in a new direful calamity.

The eldest son of Doctor Birch, a most amiable young man, in the frenzy of wounded honour and affection, to expunge, as he erroneously believed, the fell

stain from his family's purity, had called the miscreant destroyer of his sister's innocence, his father's senses, from his couch, and, instead of the vengeance he aimed, received the bullet of the calmer Walton through his body; and Falkland, in extracting the ball, perceived the spine was grazed, and therefore the probability was the unfortunate young man would remain a cripple for the rest of his life.

The anguished despair of Mrs. Birch was such as might be expected in a complication of calamity, brought on by her own reprehensible conduct in encouraging the intimacy of a known libertine in her family: nothing now but ruin appeared to her view, for her second son was a cadet in India, and the third a youth of fourteen; therefore support, with peace and honour, now was wrested from them, since who could conduct the school?

This was a question now often repeated by many an individual in this distracted family; and Mellifont at length summoning Falkland to a private conference, demanded candidly from him, "if he thought his abilities were adequate to car-

rying on that important undertaking, for the support of his dear benefactor and his numerous family?"

Falkland, overpowered by this proof of sterling virtue in this true penitent, was some moments ere he had voice to answer him; a pause which the alarmed Mellifont construed into an ill omen, and that delicacy caused his silence.

"Alas! alas!" he exclaimed, "what then will become of them? My wish to evince my gratitude to one of the most amiable of mankind led me to overrate my own powers, and I hoped I was equal to it."

"My dear Mellifont," said Falkland, you misconceived the source of my silence; it was the applause of my heart to your excellence. Yes; surely you are fully equal to the undertaking. Your motives for entering upon such a task must make each individual to overlook the errors inexperience may, in possibility, first lead you into; but fear not, great abilities like yours must vanquish every difficulty. My advice, my interest, my pecuniary aid, shall ever be yours, dear Mellifont; and

rest well satisfied, that exertions so inspired by benevolence and gratitude can never want support from those who know how to appreciate human worth."

"Oh, Sir," returned Mellifont, "I merely pay a debt, even should success attend my toils; for think what a miscreant I now had been, dishonouring human nature, had it not been for you, Montague Bouverie, and the dear, inestimable, unfortunate doctor! Oh, Mr. Falkland! that hour in which your united goodness reclaimed me my penitent heart has never, never lost the sensations of; and when the remembrance of my gratitude can fade, then I must become again the wretch you transformed me from.

"Will you, dear Sir, offer the hearty services of my grateful life to Mrs. Birch to conduct the school for her until the fortunate moment that the dear doctor, my beloved friend William, or one of his brothers, can take it off my hands?"

Falkland made the offer, which was too teeming with advantage to this family of menaced ruin not joyfully to be accepted. Mrs. Birch was, as usual, to superintend

the domestic department, and Mellifont to be remunerated merely as the head assistant, for so he stipulated; but Lord Beechbrook and Falkland determined that should not be the only reward of his toils and virtues; and, lest the debts of Doctor Birch should rise up to harass and impede his exertions, they, aided by the benevolent Adelaide, paid them all.

And now the Miss Birches found, from their own reprehensible encouragement to an abandoned individual, they were compelled to accept, and with gratitude too, their own subsistence, and the support of their unfortunate, helpless father and brother, from Mellifont, whom they had affected to despise for former trangressions, and for submitting to be a pupil of their father's bounty; and often they wondered, and censured Miss Bouverie for the respect with which she undeviatingly treated a man who had once been so notorious in dishonour; for Mellifont's vice was not the one sanctioned by the fair, and, beside, it was repented of. Walton's enormities were stylish, were popular; he, under security of the father's function, the brother's

youth, shielding him from vengeance, brought infamy and ruin on them; and the groveling penitent voluntarily stood forth to yield them bread,

CHAPTER VIII.

The influence of Walton's vices stopped not even here, for, irritated to the brutal malice of a demon of revenge against the hapless Lucy for establishing, as he conceived, the contempt of Adelaide too firmly ever to hope for vanquishing it, he repaired, immediately after the direful termination of his duel with William Birch (and while a carriage was preparing to convey him to a temporary seclusion until the fate of William could be ascertained), to the cottage of poor Lucy; and where, by his unexpected appearance, and by the violence of his savage invectives, he brought on her such dreadful paroxysms of derangement that her feeble frame could not sustain, and at the expiration of two days her exhausted nature sunk from its mortal miseries, to find pity and mercy where no Walton could appear to blight her everlasting peace.

Adelaide, who had attended the hapless Lucy through the last scenes of her life

of early woes, was just returned after the awful all was over, and was weeping on the sympathising bosom of Mrs. Falkland her detail of Lucy's exit, when she was compelled to a hasty retreat, as Lord Aberavon was unexpectedly announced.

His lordship, who had been disappointed the preceding day of the happiness of seeing Adelaide, from her being in attendance upon poor Lucy, was now so chagrined by his second disappointment, that, in the ebullition of his mortification, he made a full confession to Mrs. Falkland of the state of his heart, and implored her interest and advice; and so successfully did he plead his cause with her, that she promised him the former, and gave him the latter.

"I am sorry," she said, "my first advice must wear an unpleasing aspect to your lordship, as it recommends an enormous stock of patience and forbearance to you; but the heart of Adelaide, believe me, is well worth every exertion to obtain it. My advice to you is to commence a wary, covert siege of the affections of Adelaide, since a prompt and open attack would only subject you to inevitable defeat; for you

have the difficult task to perform of surmounting prejudices ere you can hope for success. From the representations of Lady Ambrosia Leyburn of your lordship's juvenile exploits, our primitively reared Adelaide has imbibed inauspicious impression, which you must contrive to remove ere you can hope to effect a tender influence in her bosom."

Lord Aberavon, though sensibly mortified by this intelligence, was very grateful to Mrs. Falkland for her kind advice, which he determined implicitly to follow; for though not a little chagrined at the idea of being compelled to the unusual humiliation of manœuvring to obtain a heart, yet he thought no toil, no agony of suspense, could be too dear a purchase for the affection and hand of Adelaide.

The day after the decease of the unfortunate Lucy, Adelaide requested her guardian to write to Montagu Bouverie, to announce this blighted flower of his benevolent pity being happily removed from all her sublunary sufferings; but Falkland, wishing that Adelaide herself should convey the intelligence, told her he considered the

goodness of Bouverie to poor Lucy claimed that compliment from her as the unfortunate young woman's benefactress; when Adelaide, as it was Falkland's desire, complied, and despatched a letter with the melancholy tidings to Montagu.

The Longuivilles, anxious to obtain such a charming addition to the society in their regiment, devised innumerable parties to promote the interest of Lord Aberavon with the lovely object they felt conviction he fervently adored; and after two months strict conformity with the advice of Mrs. Falkland, aided by the kindness of these other anxious friends, his lordship's hopes and wishes were just so far successful that he had contrived to remove from the mind of Adelaide every unfavourable impression of his moral conduct, who even thought him eminently prepossessing; but no betraying symptom yet appeared of that auspicious tenderness his lordship languished to inspire her with, and Rosalind began to feel as much out of patience as the lover himself, as the sometimes dormant but never eradicated weakness of her bosom was now rekindling to another temporary

glow, by the evident satisfaction Falkland evinced at the continued insensibility of Adelaide to Lord Aberavon's merits.

The month of October, at length, was fast drawing to its close when Adelaide received a letter from Lady Ambrosia, dated Roscoville, and proved a composition to the following effect.—

"MY DEAR ADELAIDE,

"As you have ever been kind and affectionate to me, and are so lenient to the misdeeds of all the world, I cherish no doubt of your long since having forgiven my girlish prank of seducing an adorer from you; which I was led to by the most ardent and unalienable affection springing up at first sight in my heart for him, even in the stand at Barham Downs; when conceiving him to be the Marquis of Glendale, whom as you had rejected, I took no trouble to crush my passion in the bud, and so it obtained that dominion over me which led me to act as I did.

"I am certain too, from your uniform good nature, you will rejoice to hear Theodore is the most tender, ardent, adoring

lover a woman ever yet was fated to find in a husband; and much he wonders, and his wonder hourly augments to increased amazement, how he ever did, or could, for even one moment, prefer you to me.

"You will be surprised, no doubt, to observe that we are at Roscoville; but my dear mother received us with open arms after we returned from passing our honey-moon in Cumberland. The glum Clydes have never thought proper to answer one of my adoring and adored *caro sposo*'s letters, so I have prevailed upon him to promise me solemnly never to condescend to them again.

"Mamma desires me to say she shall be most happy if you will join our Christmas party here; and I hope you will, dear Adelaide, as I assure you I have nothing to apprehend in the world from Theodore's seeing you.

"Mamma, who is so fond of Theodore, and so vain of me, it is quite delightful to behold her conduct to us, desires me to ask you 'If her brother carried away with him from hence a small gold key of curious

workmanship?' Every part of this abbey she can gain access to has been searched for it, and so has De Moreland Castle too by that obliging fright Mrs. Crow, but to no purpose.

"'So! prettily, I find, the Birches and Woodehouses have stigmatised themselves! For my part, I felt neither surprise nor concern at it; they were such bold things, and so envious and vain. Apropos! Captain Walton has been staying here this month on a visit to Leyburn, with whom he was a great friend and ally while the latter was at school at Doctor Birch's; but he has been unexpectedly ordered from his inactive station at Seaview to command a frigate, destined for a three years' banishment to the coast of Greenland, or Lapland, or somewhere he is in a horrid rage at going to, as it will deprive him of all chance of obtaining you; and much he suspects Lord Beechbrook as the cause of this evil befalling him.

"'Poor Walton showed me a letter he received just before I arrived here from my *ci-devant* friend Lydia Woodehouse, in

which she all but implores him to return and marry her; but he only laughs at the implied proposition. 'As to Eliza Birch, that vain creature,' he says, 'he soon learned to loath her, she was so desperately in love with him.' However, he and I have kindly made a match for her. When she repents her of her little trespass, kindred sympathy will attract the worthy, plodding Mellifont into attachment to her; and as a pair of glorious penitents they may live happily together, as miracles of contrition, and set up as preachers in a conventicle.

"Theodore is so distracted at being bereaved so long of my fascinating smiles, as he gallantly calls them, that I cannot enter into any particular detail of the distressing news which has at length reached us of my poor uncle; suffice it to say, he is no more. Baronello is arrived, having made his escape with the melancholy intelligence; and Montagu, now Lord De Moreland, has been written to, by my mother; since he, to her infinite chagrin and surprise, is left sole executor, and the will, which is

deposited in Mr. Coke's hands, not to be opened until Montagu's arrival.

"Adieu!

"Ever yours, sincerely

"and affectionately,

"AMBROSIA BOUVERIE.

"P. S. We have heard from Cyrus, who has been in several engagements, has got a great deal of prize money, and much commendation from his admiral."

The transient contempt the littleness pourtrayed in the commencement of this epistle excited in the breast of Adelaide quickly faded before surprise at the invitation of Lady Leyburn for her spending her Christmas at Roscoville, but that sensation soon was superseded by joy at the gold key being in safe hands; but this emotion was, in its turn, borne down by horrid amazement at her cousin having so degraded the delicacy of her mind, so sullied its purity, as to allow the miscreant Walton the insulting opportunity of talking to her upon the subject of his libertine enormities; and that Ambrosia could enter with him into ridicule of Mellifont's peni-

tence, and of his magnanimous gratitude to his amiable benefactor, so overwhelmed her by dismay and grief, that her comprehension did not seem, at the commencement of another subject, perfectly to perform its part; but promptly it aroused to the fullest perception of trembling sensibility, and faintly articulating an exclamation of distress, she sunk senseless at the feet of Falkland and Rosalind, who were seated near her at the moment.

Nothing could exceed the consternation or the tender concern of Mrs. Falkland, until she perceived the agony of her husband's alarm and distress equalled that, at least, which she could suppose he would feel was the wife of his bosom unexpectedly to fall a corse at his feet. The ghastly hue of his complexion, his almost frantic exclamations, the palsied tremor of his frame, all spoke in daggers to her self-tormenting heart; and her assiduities in the restoration of the swooning Adelaide were no longer the inspirations of fond affection—they chilled to the comparatively cold exertions of mere humanity, and her anguished cries of—

"Oh! Augustus, she is dead! she is dead! our darling Adelaide is gone for ever from us!" froze at once to, "What, Sir, do you wish me to call for, to aid the restoration of Miss Bouverie?"

The returning animation of his beloved *elève* was, by this time, perceptible to Falkland; he had, therefore, power to remark the transition in his adored wife; and whilst it pained him sensibly, he would not suffer it to effect any change in him, except, if possible, to increase the tenderness of his tones in his invocations to the "child of his heart, the pride and honour of his paternal care, to speak, and tell him what dire misfortune had assailed her."

The tender tones of her guardian's affection promptly operated on the susceptible feelings of Adelaide as soon as she had power to understand them, and, melting her into tears of gratitude, speedily restored her intellectual faculties; when perceiving the terrible expression of anguished despair which the countenance of Rosalind pourtrayed, and construing it as the aspect of alarmed affection, she threw herself from the supporting arms of Falkland upon the

bosom of his wife, and as she fondly encircled her in her fervent embrace, bewailed her having frightened her so much.

"But, indeed, I could not help it. It was not my fault," she added, sobbing in an anguished burst of sorrow's agonizing tears.

"No, it was not your fault," said Rosalind, in a tone of alarming wildness.

"Rosalind! Rosalind!" the terrorized Falkland exclaimed, catching her in his trembling arms, "what means this? What thus has shook the idol of my love? Oh! let not dismay, awakened by the state the child of my fond, paternal care was reduced to, overwhelm me with some dire calamity in you! Oh, my Rosalind! arouse your faculties, your powerful faculties, and let us give consolation to our mutually adored *elève*, whose cause of poignant sorrow we yet are uninformed of."

The affection pourtrayed in Adelaide's distress at having alarmed her subdued at once the demon awakening in the bosom of Rosalind, in respect to her having formed a wish to estrange the heart of her husband from her; but not even the tender-

ness of tones, looks, and language evinced by Falkland towards her could completely hush the baneful conviction awakened in her mind; and ill effected was the endeavour she attempted to appear herself again, and to inquire, with a natural tone of interest, the cause which operated in subduing Adelaide?

Our convulsively sobbing heroine, anxious not to shock her friends as she herself had been shocked, with gentle caution prepared them to expect intelligence of Lord De Moreland's death, ere she confirmed it to them.

The sorrow of Adelaide sunk deep into the centre of her heart, where she poignantly mourned her uncle as the last of her race who regarded her. His kindness had made a deep impression on the gratitude of her nature and the tenderness of her heart; while his ill health and his secret sorrows had deeply interested her, and his resemblance and affinity to her father had given him, independently of every other attaching tie, so large a portion of her filial affection, that her sorrow for him was that of a child for a tenderly loved parent,

and her frame, overpowered by the shock she had sustained, could not bear her up against the subduing tide of grief, and she fell ill; but although not dangerously so, yet sufficiently to awaken alarm of future consequences upon a frame so fragile, a mind so susceptible as hers, in the bosom of her anxious guardian, and to call forth every exertion of his skill and tender care for her restoration to health.

The moment Rosalind found Adelaide was ill, she hushed every baneful influence acting upon her mind that could operate in their effect on her husband's ward; and tenderly and conscientiously she nursed the being whom she feared had now a stronger hold upon the affections of her husband than she had; and not until Adelaide was pronounced perfectly firm in the path of convalescence did Mrs. Falkland suffer the visionary torment of her mind to act upon her conduct: but then, and as our heroine's sorrows gradually lost their extreme poignancy, she allowed some little, pettish asperities frequently to escape her, not more unmerited than inexplicable to poor Adelaide, who was restrained by gra-

titude to Rosalind from uttering a murmur at caprice and unkindness which cruelly pained her gentle and affectionate heart.

Neither, through delicacy, would she make any complaint of his Rosalind to her beloved guardian, whom, with direful dismay and grief, she saw was no longer the happy husband he had been; and although she deeply mourned this sad change, and marvelled at the mysterious cause, she forbore by any means to denote her observation of it, but always felt relieved, as if an oppressive weight of misery was taken from her bosom, when the frequent change of air which Falkland prescribed for her removed her abode for a few days to Beechbrook or Mrs. Aspenfield's, and yielded a respite to the augmentation of her sympathetic regrets.

And during the anxious period of Adelaide's indisposition, Lord Aberavon omitted no opportunity of evincing the most animated attention and solicitude; but just as she was sufficiently recovered for him once more to have the happiness of sometimes seeing her, and of evincing all of ardent attachment he might yet dare to

betray to her, he was, to his own misery and Mrs. Falkland's dismay, suddenly summoned into Scotland by his mother, upon a dire calamity having befallen the elder branch of their house.

CHAPTER IX.

ALTHOUGH the poignancy of Adelaide's sorrow yielded to the influence of reason and religion, and that its external aspect became less and less perceptible, yet still a lively remembrance of it was cherished in her heart, and De Moreland Castle became her favourite haunt; for within its walls were the remains of her tenderly loved parents, and in the library hung a fine portrait of her uncle; and as in the library of this ancient castle she now passed many a pensive hour, amongst her researches for more and more knowledge, she found a manuscript volume of instructive tales in German, the moral so unexceptionable, the language so beautiful, that, charmed to enthusiasm, she took the volume with her when she returned to the priory, as she thought Mrs. Falkland would find pleasure in perusing it.

Adelaide was not mistaken. Rosalind was charmed with the tales; so much so,

that she regretted extremely her not being sufficiently versed in the German language to translate them with the elegance and animation of the original, or she would put them in an English garb, and present them, as a most valuable and acceptable offering, to Lady Beechbrook, for the edification of her daughters.

Mrs. Falkland wishing to have these tales in English was sufficient to animate the grateful and affectionate Adelaide with an ardent desire to translate them for her; and the first opportunity she could find for speaking to her guardian unobserved by Rosalind—an opportunity which her anxiety to obtain led her to remark a singularity in finding a difficulty in meeting—she timidly inquired, "If he thought her competent to such an undertaking?"

Falkland wishing his beloved ward to enter upon some novel employment that might interest her, and anxious, too, that her gentle, affectionate attentions to his self-tormenting wife should not be annihilated by the repelling, ungracious change in Rosalind, gave her ardent heart high gratification by assuring her he thought

her fully competent to accomplishing her undertaking.

Adelaide "begged her attempt might be kept a profound secret from Mrs. Falkland, whom she wished to surprise and puzzle by conjectures of who the translator could be, as she determined to have it beautifully printed and bound, and sent anonymously to her; and no one but her dear, kind, indulgent guardian, from whom she never had, never would keep any secrets, should ever know she had been so presumptuous."

The paternally adoring tenderness of Falkland, aroused by this artless burst of grateful affection's enthusiastic feeling, pressed Adelaide to his bosom with the pure fervor of an attached father of a darling child, and, unfortunately, in the very moment the warily watchful Rosalind entered the adjoining room, from whence she beheld them; and her senses seemed about to suffer annihilation when she perceived Falkland was about to speak, and she determined to lull her direful agitation to learn all, although that all might shake her reason from its seat for ever.

"Success to your pleasing undertaking, pride of my anxious and well rewarded care!" Falkland said: "and would you know the moment you are dearest to my heart, my child, it is when, as now, you evince your affection for my adored wife."

Falkland, tremblingly alive to the apprehension of being discovered by the suspicious Rosalind in *tête-à-tête* with Adelaide, now bade her a hasty adieu; when Mrs. Falkland, fearing detection in her degrading station, rapidly fled to the sanctuary of her own boudoir, there to ruminate upon all she had witnessed: but however gratifying the words of her husband sounded, when they fell upon her devouring ears, they were now industriously perverted by the baleful passion which had usurped the candour of her hitherto amiable heart, and placed to the supposition of his having observed her in her ambush; and now the doubts, the suspicions, the anguish awakened by the embrace she had seen, were only encouraged and remembered.

Adelaide had commenced her undertaking about a fortnight ere Falkland ventured to De Moreland Castle, where, for the se-

curity of her secret, she determined principally to execute her translation; but while he inspected the beautiful blossoms of her promising labour, his ward, by his desire, was benefiting by a walk in the grounds; a precaution he congratulated himself not a little upon having taken, when, after he had been about half an hour delightfully engaged inspecting and admiring Adelaide's most correct performance, Mrs. Crow unceremoniously burst into the room.

Falkland, provoked by so rude an intrusion, haughtily inquired, "What had obtained for him the honour of an unannounced visit?"

"Dear! I ask pardon," she said, with a sarcastic smile; "but I could not conceive you wished for privacy, as I understood Miss Bouverie was here, whom I wanted to inquire of, 'If she can give any tale or tidings of this wearisome gold key?'—Where, in the name of wonder, has she retreated to?"

"You will find her on the terrace, where I sent her to walk when I arrived here," returned Falkland, calmly; "but it is perfectly inutile, Mrs. Crow, to torment her

further relative to that key, for Mrs. Falkland, when my ward was too ill to write, informed Lady Leyburn Miss Bouverie could give no intelligence of that key."

"Lady Leyburn has cogent reasons for wishing to hear what Miss Bouverie says upon the subject herself; but are you sure, Sir, that I shall find her on the terrace?"

"Perfectly, Madam," returned Falkland, "because I desired her to go there, and I have always found her too obedient a child ever to dispute my commands."

Mrs. Crow now proceeded to the grounds; and Falkland, putting Adelaide's translation in his pocket to peruse uninterruptedly in his own library, locked up her other papers, and hastened after Mrs. Crow, fearing Adelaide might find it difficult to ward off effectually the artful questions of this venal tool of villany; but as Adelaide knew the importance of secrecy, relative to this key, with truth affirmed—

"She could give no intelligence of this key in question."

Falkland soon perceiving she could do without him gave her the library private keys, and telling her he had put a German

translation in his pocket to peruse at home, bade her adieu.

The moment Falkland disappeared, Mrs. Crow demanded the keys he had just given to Adelaide.

"I want them, Miss," she said, "to look for papers Lady Leyburn requires; and had I sooner known you had them, I should have got them from you; but my lady thought my lord took them abroad with him. I must have them, Miss."

"Excuse me, Madam. I cannot commit a breach of trust."

"Then pray, Miss, why did you let Mr. Falkland have them?"

"My uncle, Madam, confided these keys to Mr. Falkland for my use and benefit in acquiring knowledge; and they are now left in my possession because I am on a visit at Seaview, and require them."

"I suppose your love letters are deposited where Mr. Falkland was reading, and you feared to have them seen," exclaimed Mrs. Crow, spitefully."

"I have no letters," said Adelaide, calmly, "that I can fear to have inspected."

"What! no tender billets from your

sanctified guardian? Aye, we all know what induces your rejection of so many offers."

The sublimated fire of indignant innocence emanated from the eyes of Adelaide as, in the enthusiasm of wounded gratitude, she exclaimed—

"Sanctified guardian! Mrs. Crow! Can I believe it possible, that if you forgot my obligations to Mr. Falkland you could cease to remember your own? But my memory is faithful to both; and while it prevents my suffering aspersions to be thrown upon his immaculate goodness in my presence, will also lead me to inform him how *reverently* you treat the name of a benefactor."

Mrs. Crow, terrorized at the idea of a complaint to Falkland of what had ebulliated imprudently from her in the effervescence of her disappointment's rage, now began most fawningly to implore Adelaide not to repeat what she had merely uttered in jest.

"Mrs. Crow, you must excuse the abruptness of my departure, since I never will voluntarily continue in the society of that

individual who, whether in sport or seriousness, dares to speak irreverently of my exemplary guardian, my second father, in my presence," said Adelaide, determinately. "As to what your singularly sounding jests, Madam, aimed at me, the shield I present to ward off its intended shaft is scorn—the scorn of conscious purity defying malice."

And now, winged with indignation's rapid speed, Adelaide made her fleet way to the presence of Mrs. Aspenfield, and in the swelling agitation of her feelings, and the ingenuousness of her guileless nature, she imparted all that had occurred in her interview with Mrs. Crow to this sincere friend, to whom now she found it necessary to reveal the undertaking she was engaged in, to account for her guardian's having the library keys, and being found by Mrs. Crow there.

Mrs. Aspenfield for some time had secretly cherished a suspicion that the peace of her child and the sweetness of her disposition were disturbed by an ideal jealousy of her husband and of Adelaide; and now a painful conviction of her surmise being true was conveyed to her bosom;

for knowing that Rosalind had lately had some interviews with Mrs. Crow, ostensibly for some charitable purposes, she doubted not from what invidious source the poison to her peace had been conveyed; and promptly she determined to go the succeeding morning alone to the priory, to win her daughter into yielding her full confidence, and then to adopt those methods she should consider the most promising of success for weeding her child's mind of those noxious seeds of baneful tendency which had been scattered there.

But while this project occupied the most lively interest in the mind of Mrs. Aspenfield, she omitted not to soothe the keenly wounded delicacy of poor Adelaide, nor to lull her apprehension of the private depositories of her late uncle being broke open by the agents of the interested Lady Leyburn, to the injury of the new lord.

"It is absolutely necessary, my dear," added Mrs. Aspenfield, "that you should have some consultation with your guardian upon this subject. I will, therefore, despatch a note to him to-night, to call him hither in the morning for that purpose."

Falkland accordingly arrived the following day, in compliance with Mrs. Aspenfield's desire, when the apprehensions of Adelaide relative to the interest of Montagu, from the emissaries of Lady Leyburn, chiefly awakened by her recollection of the nocturnal scene of such meditated villany se had witnessed at Roscoville, were made known to him; but there the sensitive delicacy of Adelaide tinting her cheeks with painful blushes refused to let her utter more, leaving it to Mrs. Aspenfield to announce the insinuations of the malicious Mrs. Crow.

Falkland was sensibly shocked and distressed; and now all trembling apprehension lest the noxious breath of calumny should spread its blighting influence against the purest child of innocence, felt a doubt of the propriety of going even then to the castle with Adelaide, although on the important business of securing the papers of Lord De Moreland.

"You shall go with me in my carriage, and I will remain with you while necessity compels your stay there," said Mrs. Aspenfield; "therefore under my auspices you

may defy the power of calumny. I shall then repair to the priory, and hope to bring back Rosalind and the children to spend a happy day all together, in defiance of the malicious machinations of that Mrs. Crow.'

Falkland now unhesitatingly accompanied Mrs. Aspenfield and his ward to De Moreland Castle, where he reminded the steward and housekeeper of the late lord's commands to them relative to Miss Bouverie being mistress of that castle, and who therefore now, in consequence of that absolute power invested in her by her uncle, issued her positive orders, "That Mrs. Crow was, upon no pretence whatever, not even through an order from Lady Leyburn, to be admitted there, until the new lord should arrive to take from Miss Bouverie the authority his predecessor had given to her."

They next proceeded to the library, where they affixed seals upon every depository of papers they thought it necessary to secure; and then Falkland sat down to point out to his *elève* a few passages in her translation which were not so simply beautiful as the original.

When Falkland commenced these observations to Adelaide, Mrs. Aspenfield strolled into an adjoining room appertaining to the library suite, where all the works of fancy were collected, to look for something to amuse her; so that Falkland and his ward were alone in the great room, seated side by side at a table, and apparently in earnest conference, when the door was suddenly burst open by Rosalind, who in direful agitation stood before them.

"So! so!" she murmuringly articulated, in the hollow tones of soul-harrowing despair, "I have not been misinformed, and I have been rightly guided hither to detect you."

Adelaide, who only thought of her translation, not once conceiving the malice of Mrs. Crow was raging in baleful influence upon the enlightened mind of Rosalind, innocently exclaimed—

"Oh! how provoking! Who could have discovered my secret now, and told you of it, to spoil all my plans?"

"What! do you confess them then? You glory in them! Oh, shameless girl! Perfidious Falkland!" exclaimed the almost

maniac Rosalind, one look at whom had aroused the most powerful terror in the mind of Adelaide; who in anguished grief conceived, from the ghastly hue of her complexion, the expression of her eyes and countenance altogether, that the most direful of human maladies had assailed her.

But soon the dismay of Adelaide was changed to another source; for Rosalind, uninterrupted by her indignant, heart-rived husband, burst forth into accusations against the faith of Falkland, the innocence of Adelaide, with all the ingenuity of inventive torment a jealous imagination could devise; while Adelaide, convulsed by all the tortures of wounded delicacy and calumniated purity, sobbed in anguish upon the bosom of the terribly agitated Mrs. Aspenfield, who had been attracted by her daughter's voice into the room.

"Oh! Rosalind! Rosalind!" at length exclaimed Mrs. Aspenfield, bursting into an agony of tears, "is mine indeed the fate to survive your massacred father only to behold my child, the pride of my heart, a being blessed beyond compeer, ungrateful for her unexampled happiness, fling it

like a maniac away; become at once an unjust ingrate to arraign her most tender, indulgent, adoring husband of infidelity—the most guileless, most innocent of human cherubs of impure designs?"

"Oh! Madam," said the agonizingly agitated Falkland, "this dire transformation of your Rosalind from an angel to what she now stands before us is not new to me. What you have now heard her utter against me has been her afflicting language for many a dreadful day to me; and patiently, though not unfeelingly, have I borne this misery of her creation, in the fond, but now, alas! I see, forlorn hope of her senses taking their natural tone, and her heart resuming its influence.

"But now she has dared to asperse the child of immaculate innocence confided to my care; dared to stamp her husband as the infernal villain who could have in wish and purpose the seduction of that heavenly innocent, when she dared, on finding her own most correct mother present at our interview, by her perseverance in her meditated defamations, to implicate that mother as a pander to my infamous designs;

to longer remain passive would be in me a crime degrading to the dignity of those she has insulted."

"And pray, Sir—pray, Sir, may I, your scorned, your abhorred wife, presume to ask you what this necessary, dignified activity is to lead you to?" demanded Rosalind, with the ironical, agitated insolence of tottering reason, shook by unbridled passion.—"To elope with Miss Bouverie, I presume, and take my most correct mother with you as a sanctified sanction."

"The irony and insolence of your deforming passions, Mrs. Falkland, I will treat with the contemptuous silence they merit," replied her husband, with calm determination: "I will only speak to your better propensities.

"It is not through the vaunting boast of exulting vanity I affirm, that from the period my heart first became devoted to you until the hour of our union, it was not because I was not tempted, nay wooed, from my constancy that I remained firm in my attachment to you. It was not because, since our marriage, I have not been avowedly assailed by those who possessed

more beauty than virtue that I have continued unfaltering in my faith to you.

"And never, from the moment my heart imbibed its tender passion for you, did I cease to adore you with ardent love: yet, yet, in all the fond homage of my fervent devotion to you, in the unwearied exertions I have unceasingly made to discover by what hitherto untried indulgence I could more, and still more, evince how tenderly my very soul cleaved to you, I have been suspected of infidelity in the most demoniac form—arraigned, tried, and condemned, without one proof but what your own fertile imagination *gratefully* supplied you with.

"Our wedded happiness is blasted, Rosalind, by yourself. The life I have endured for the last few weeks has been dreadful; but what are past miseries to those which menace me, now I know all you suspect me of? Therefore, it is our doom, and you have registered it in the book of fate—we part for ever!"

"Part!!!" Adelaide almost shrieked, as she flew from the arms of Mrs. Aspenfield to her guardian; when, in the impe-

tuosity of her enthusiastic feelings, she sunk at his feet, to give force, by her suppliant posture, to her petition: "Oh! never, never, Sir, divide yourself from your Rosalind—the adored of your heart—the wife of your bosom—the mother of your helpless babes: but send me, me the unfortunate source of this terrible disunion, away! Banish me to the most distant circle of the earth, where even my name shall never sound from to give pain to Mrs. Falkland; and cheerfully will I go, to give you back your peace, your happiness."

"No, Adelaide, my child!" said Falkland, tenderly raising her, and giving her back to the support of Mrs. Aspenfield—"you shall never be sent from beneath my roof whilst I inhabit it, except to that of a husband. Did I not solemnly promise your now beatified mother, who once was the bosom friend of this Rosalind, who has defamed your immaculate innocence, that I never would relinquish my guardianship of you until I yielded you to a husband's care?"

"And so determined are you in consci-

entious supererogation of adherence to the care of your *immaculate* ward," exclaimed Rosalind, who had been more alarmed and affected by her husband's threat and appeals than the pride of her perverted feelings would permit her to discover, now attempting a laugh, which betrayed itself to be the hysteric one of nearly vanquished contumacy, "that you will not give her to the care of any husband; nor will Miss Bouverie, in her dutiful adherence to the protection her mother confided her to, go from it to that of any *caro sposo*, however unexceptionable the alliance."

"Oh! Mrs. Falkland!" said Adelaide, in the tremulous tones of strongly wounded feeling, "was it my doing that, while engaged in attendance upon Frederick, my perfidious cousin estranged the affections from me of the man I had determined to accept, and effectually deprived me of the power of being united to him?"

"N—o—o, certainly," replied Mrs. Falkland, whose conscience smote her with a potent pang on this delicately-framed mention of Frederick; "but why reject all

other suitors? Why is Lord Aberavon so discouragingly treated?"

"If my marriage, Madam, will restore, and effectually, the peace of my exemplary guardian, I will promise to accept the first man who offers that I can have a chance of escaping misery with, should any man ever again offer after such terrible things are suspected of me."

"No, my child, you shall make no promise, make no sacrifice of your happiness for my peace, since that is now gone for ever," said Falkland; "and it would only add a direful load to my misery to see yours established to humour the wishes of an ungrateful woman."

"Mrs. Falkland," he continued, "as this is, probably, the last conversation we may hold for years, perhaps for ever, I will condescend to reply to your often repeated demand of, 'why I appeared so averse to Adelaide's favouring any of her numerous suitors?' It was not, Madam, as you so charitably conceived, in consequence of my own illicit passion, but in compliance with the secret wish of her uncle, to have

her heart guarded, if possible, for Montagu Bouverie, to whom it was his lordship's fondest hope to see our dearest child united."

The senses of Adelaide sickened, she knew not why; and as her head sunk for coveted support upon the shoulder of Mrs. Aspenfield, she faintly articulated—

"Oh, Sir! and would you then have suffered me to wed his brother?"

"Never, Adelaide, never," he replied, "had I not met the severe disappointment of finding Montagu, from desiring to promote your union with his brother, no longer wished it with himself.

"But ere we dismiss this subject of Mrs. Falkland's digression, from her separation from her own husband to uniting you to yours, I must implore, as one of my last solemn requests to you, my child, not to allow the impetuosity of your generous, ardent feelings to lead you, in the visionary heroism of restoring my finally blasted peace, to bestow your hand upon Lord Aberavon, or any suitor encouraged by Mrs. Falkland's jealousy, until six months after the expected return of Montagu; for

yielding that period to the possible accomplishment of the late lord's wish is a compliment to your uncle's memory you will not hesitate to pay: but whilst you are thus paying this tribute of your duty by this delay, guard your heart, I conjure you, my child, against finding the disappointment which still may await your uncle's wishes as one of pain to you.

"Hitherto, from the lovely blossoms of that fruit I sewed the seeds of, I may even vauntingly boast I have rigidly performed my duty towards my precious charge; but now, alas! a new, an unexpected duty is assigned me. Your innocence has been basely, cruelly, ungratefully slandered, and I must tear myself from protecting you to expunge the fell aspersion. Whilst I remained in my own house, I would not have sent you permanently from it for any consideration; but, chased from my home, I consign you to the respectable protection of Mrs. Aspenfield, until the peerless Rosalind—who once confided in the faith and honour of the husband she loved, who once appreciated the innocence of the ward that husband gloried in—transmigrates

from the fell fiend who has usurped her gentle spirit, giving to that his own deforming aspect.

"As to my destination, I shall, after tearing myself from my adored, my helpless children, whose infantine ailments may often call in vain for their father's professional aid, this very day proceed to London to obtain a diplomatique situation, to send me from my native country. Many such, from time to time, have been offered me, while my delusive domestic happiness chained me to my home; but from the frequency of these applications, I naturally augur no impeding difficulty awaits my present purpose; and my being employed on a public mission will form a plausible excuse for my absenting myself from my wife and children.

"You, Mrs. Falkland, I will leave in uncontrolled possession of my house and fortune, secure in the belief that by my children you will perform your duty, although, poor unfortunates! their father is by you pronounced a villain of infernal mould. At Mordaunt Priory you can, Madam, keep your little court, assemble

your satellites, who, like Mrs. Crow, being disappointed in their projects relative to me, and hating you as the ostensible cause, find malicious pleasure in separating you from that husband they could not gain. Collect them round you, Madam; and while they feed your present ruling passion, they will exult in the excellent jest of hoaxing the highly gifted Mrs. Falkland out of that perfect happiness her smiling destiny had conferred upon her."

Falkland now arose, and tremulously grasping a hand of Mrs. Aspenfield and of Adelaide, continued—

"I am now going, as the delegate of Adelaide, to forbid Mrs. Crowe this castle, and to announce to her the consequence of her further slander. I shall then make a hasty preparation for my prompt departure; and if—if, after parting with my boys, my darling cherubs—if I can encounter another torturing farewel to my darling *elève*, I will see you both again ere my banishment; if not, believe my tenderest blessing rests on my child. With you, dear and good Mrs. Aspenfield, I will regularly correspond. Forgive your

child, and comfort her with all your maternal tenderness in those misfortunes she overwhelmed herself with."

Falkland now, with the anguished countenance and agitated air of a man mentally subdued, rushed from the room. Adelaide, in grief and dismay too potent for concealment, bitterly, heart-rendingly wept; while Mrs. Aspenfield, though painfully perturbed, still believed Falkland would never find resolution to put his threats in execution—threats which she hoped were only meant to strike with powerful effect upon the perverted feelings of her daughter. Unfortunately, Rosalind thought so too; when, urged by that belief to perseverance in her contumacy of pride, she struggled only to subdue each softening feeling; and, sullen and scornful, she made no attempt to stay her departing husband—cast no look of awakening contrition, of tenderly hoped-for reconciliation, to melt her husband's heart to love and her.

"Oh! Rosalind!" exclaimed her heart-rived mother, "and can you let him go

without one conciliating effort on your part?"

"Assuredly, certainly, Madam," Mrs. Falkland replied, in all the overstrained *hauteur* of wilful adherence to error. "Mr. Falkland, Madam, is going to sally forth in Quixote tenderness to the fair fame of the innocent Miss Bouverie, whom I caught here, in full security, in love's tender *tête-a-tête* with her immaculate guardian."

"Oh! unkind, unjust Mrs. Falkland!" said the convulsively weeping Adelaide, rising from the seat her grief had sunk her into; and going to the table she had sat at with her guardian, drew forth her translation, and announcing what it was, added—

"I made the attempt to give you pleasure. I wished for its concealment, in the childishly, hoped-for gratification of wishing to surprise you; but, alas! how have I been foiled in all my projects!"

"Not, not in all, Miss Bouverie," replied Rosalind, her pride and perversity rising in proportion to her fears of having

acted reprehensibly; "you have fully succeeded in your display of exquisite talents to your guardian, and of your sweet, conciliating kindness to me."

"Rosalind," said Mrs. Aspenfield, with the commanding impressiveness of a parent, "Rosalind, I know the superiority of your intellectual powers, the inherent goodness of your heart, too well, not to feel firm conviction you see most acutely, you feel most keenly, the reprehensible part you have acted; and which the dire passion that has possessed you contumaciously holds you in against your better judgment, your natural goodness: therefore I forbear, as an unnecessary effort, to animadvert upon the injustice, impolicy, and cruelty you have been led into; and only as the parent whom until now you have considered as your friend, and meriting the esteem of the virtuous, I presume to remind you, that if you wish to conciliate your husband, and implore the pardon of a justly incensed man, you had better not give Mrs. Crow new cause to triumph in her malevolent ingenuity; but hasten to your home, commune there

with your own heart, and have your mind in readiness to meet your offended husband, and to avert, while yet it is in your power, this menaced separation, this final overthrow to all your earthly happiness."

"I thank you, Madam, for your kind, your judicious advice," replied Rosalind, disdainfully rising; although, when she had done so, scarcely able to stand from the agitation of her terrorized, her upbraiding heart: "but you will excuse me if I hesitate in following more than your recommendation for my returning to my home, since the friend of Miss Bouverie can only be my enemy." And now, guided by that demon who had acquired dominion over her, she rushed from her mother's presence to her carriage.

CHAPTER X.

"OH, Madam!" exclaimed the weeping Adelaide, wringing her hands in the agony of her grief, "would my ever, until this direful now, most kind, affectionate Mrs. Falkland deprive me, poor insulated orphan that I am, of every protection! Oh, Mrs. Aspenfield, to conciliate, to lull this dreadful jealousy in your daughter's mind, must you not send me from you?

"No, my love, no; she shall not, by the phrensy of her jealous mania, force me to any thing so cruel," returned Mrs. Aspenfield, with soothing kindness: "and weep not so piteously, for her senses will resume their influence ere she gains that home she at present deserves not; and she will be as ardent in her contrition as she has been violent in her transgressions: but come now, I must implore you to regain your composure to permit our return home, to be there to receive my poor Falkland, should he call."

Anxiety not to lose the possibility of seeing her guardian ere his departure arrested the tears of Adelaide, and enabled her, ere many minutes elapsed, to attend Mrs. Aspenfield to her home.

The day was far spent ere Falkland made his appearance, and then he came evidently equipped for travelling. Adelaide burst into an agony of tears, and Mrs. Aspenfield in terror demanded, "if he was really forsaking his home?"

"I am, dear Madam," Falkland answered, in the tremulous tone that betrayed how much excess of feeling had subjugated fortitude; "direful diseases often require violent remedies. The distempered jealousy of Rosalind has, alas! acquired almost the malady of mania; and nothing but decisive measures can restore her faculties to their former superexcellence.

"I have seen her, Mrs. Aspenfield, since I parted from you; but not, not as I delusively expected. Oh, no! with all the scorning irony of one assured I could not tear myself from the object of my fond adoration, she ridiculed my preparations, and offered her aid to expedite them.

Nay more, she witnessed my parting, my anguished parting, with my babes; and yet—yet *she* was not subdued!" And Falkland, no longer finding power over his firmness, burst into tears.

Mrs. Aspenfield bitterly wept, and Adelaide's sobs became more convulsive from the sympathy of her heart; and who, after several unsuccessful efforts to speak, at length articulated—

"Oh, Sir! my guardian! parent! friend! go not, I conjure you! Send me from distressing Mrs. Falkland; but do not—do not go yourself."

"Adelaide," replied Falkland, in the tremulous tones of agitation, "were you at Nova Zembla, Rosalind would in her present malady find out some other object to make us wretched. Go I must, my child, to effect a radical cure. Rosalind must feel, and sensibly too, my absence and her own enormity, ere the energies of her mind will resume their right tones, and exterminate that direfully encouraged weakness which has now become a headstrong passion, bearing down each amiable propensity of her nature, and deforming the

aspect of all that was lately so sweet and lovely.

"My present project, my affectionate child, is not the precipitate one of irritated feeling; it has been maturely weighed and considered for more than a week past by my well-tried friend, Lord Beechbrook, and myself."

"Oh, heavenly Powers! it is then inevitable, since thus deliberated!" exclaimed the heart-rived Adelaide: "and my own tender guardian, the being who hushed my infant sorrows, and reared me for a better world, will brave the dangers of the seas, the still more direful dangers of foreign climes, without his Rosalind near, or even his grateful *elève*, to sooth the bed of endemial malady, of him who soothed the sick pillow and gave the balm of health to many a drooping sufferer."

Falkland wrung the hand of Mrs. Aspenfield as falteringly he articulated, "Had Rosalind expressed affection's fears like these, could I ever, ever leave her!"

Mrs. Aspenfield shuddered, as the horror thrilled through her mind of what the force of contrast might effect.

"My child!" said Falkland, with tender emphasis, "I am happy to lull your affection inspired apprehensions relative to the effect of climate upon your grateful guardian, since I have strong hopes of obtaining a mission to ——; and you shall know how I am going on in that healthful clime, as I shall regularly correspond with your kind protectress here and with Lord Beechbrook, whom I have delegated your guardian in my absence."

"Alas! then," said Adelaide, mournfully," circumstances will not allow of your writing to me."

Falkland was silent.

"Nor, perhaps," she continued, with the catching breath of alarm, terrorized lest her apprehensive inquiry should meet a confirmation, "to—to mention even my poor name in any of your letters: even that mention would prove consolation to me, in the sweet conviction I was not forgotten by you."

"Rest assured, my child, that whether I name you or not in my letters," replied the agitated Falkland, "on my heart the memory of you and your interest is indelibly

traced, and that absence from my still, still tenderly adored, offending Rosalind, from my idolized children, will not be more keenly felt by me than my separation from you; now in a moment of scarcely renovated health, and when entering probably upon the perilous path of love and marriage, you want more peculiarly my tender, anxious care and counsels."

"But ere I go," continued Falkland, "I must exact some promises from my hitherto most dutious *elève*, to lull my agitated alarms for her health, and take from my sorrow-laden heart a great portion of anxiety." And Falkland now reverting to her late illness as the effect of nurtured sorrow, gently, yet impressively, set before her the culpability of cherishing grief to the destruction of the blessing health; and entreated her promise that she would rigidly perform her duty in striving to find, in employment and judicious amusement, specifics to prevent her feeling too sensibly the shafts of malice levelled at her seraphically pure fame, or the temporary deprivation of that protection, which being accustomed to from her infant days, she

would feel the privation of as an affliction.

"But possibly, Mrs. Aspenfield," he said more cheerfully, "our separation may not be for a very lengthened duration, since I cannot suppose a diplomatique situation awaiting my promp acceptance; therefore some necessary delay in town may give time to Rosalind to recall me. And, Mrs. Aspenfield, whenever the happy period arrives in which your child resumes her lovely self again, should she entertain an apprehension of being forgiven by me, give her this letter, written in the anticipating hope of being asked to forgive, and dictated by a fervently attached heart panting to be recalled."

The chaise for Falkland to depart in now drove up to the door. Adelaide had passed her word to exert her firmness, and shrinking from inspiring her guardian with a suspicion of the faith of her promise, stemmed with successful prowess the rising current of her impetuous sorrow, and made this fearful parting appear one of less painful anguish; and some of the fortitude now struggled for by all was raised on the

deluding basis of Mrs. Falkland soon humbling herself, to implore a reconciliation with her adoring husband.

Rosalind, in a strangely combined belief that Falkland could neither tear himself from the object of her jealousy nor from her, braved the mention of his departure as a threat which irritated her as an insulting bugbear; but when night closed in, and he appeared not, her bosom felt the innovation of many unpleasant sensations favourable to contrition; however, she retired to her chamber without betraying her feelings to her attendant: but she sought not her pillow; the window was her attraction, where she paused, she listened, her heart bounding with hope, or sinking with despair; for the form of Falkland still flitting before her vision, she heard his footsteps in every wafted leaf, his voice in every passing breeze; and the far advance of morning found her still at a window, a hope-deluded expectant.

Rosalind sought her pillow late, but she quitted it early, for upon it there was no rest for her; yet she delayed, and still delayed, her visit to the nursery; for she felt

shame and anguish in the idea of beholding her children, while from the eye of all who approached she averted her own; for conscious sheepishness pervading her every look and action, awakened by the toil she had led herself into, taught her to shrink from every gaze, lest she should discover derision in the glance of even her own domestics.

She eat no breakfast; she could attach herself to no employment: she walked from room to room in her spacious, now deserted mansion, like the restless ghost of happiness.

"Should she go to Seaview, and humble herself to her mother and Adelaide? No." From that her pride revolted. "And yet, too, her suspicions had received no proof positive of their having been unfounded. But her mother of course, impelled by the tenderness of her affection, would come to her, and then she might better form her judgment upon what was expedient to be done;" but her mother came not: Lord Beechbrook did; she trembled at his name. "Was he or not in the secret of her jealousy?" The uncordial

gravity of his countenance proclaimed that he was, and her mortified pride froze up at once every conciliating propensity of her nature.

His lordship, who was unluckily a most awkward dissimulator, dryly condoled with her upon the illness of a friend summoning her husband so precipitately from her; and, something more cordially, he invited her to pass the period of Falkland's absence with Lady Beechbrook.

With an air of the most chilling apathy, she thanked his lordship both for his condolence and his invitation; the latter of which she decidedly negatived.

"Perhaps I may prove more fortunate in my request for your dining with us today, Mrs. Falkland, to meet Mrs. Aspenfield and Adelaide."

"No, she was much obliged: she had letters of importance to write, which must detain her at home."

Lord Beechbrook conceiving, as he hoped, these letters were to her husband, her mother, and Adelaide, shortly took leave, lest he should impede so laudable a design.

"So!" mentally exclaimed Mrs. Falkland, "it is evident that I am condemned at Beechbrook as a jealous maniac, and Miss Bouverie worshipped as an injured immaculate. Mighty well! vastly well! I care not a straw!—Yet, yet if I have been misled, how am I rising in the climax of my folly! My husband forsakes me, my mother protects the girl I calumniated, and my most attached friends patronize her. By all who know the story I shall be reprobated and condemned; derided by those who deceived me into error; and by those who know nothing of the matter I shall be—oh! Heaven!—suspected of some criminal proceeding.—My husband estranged from me; his ward taken from my protection; my mother and the Beechbrooks forsake me; and thus there only wants an order to take my children to their grand-mother, and all would be complete. Oh! Heaven! what, what shall I do?"

It was very obvious what Mrs. Falkland ought to have done; but every power of her mind usurped by the baleful passion of jealousy, every one seemed perverted

by its dominion: pride and obstinacy had already superseded the directly opposite qualities, which were natural to her mind; and now folly sprung up to claim an influence there, inspiring the imprudent, impolitic design of setting out, without delay, accompanied only by her darling Danvers and his nurse, to pay a visit to her cousin, Mrs. Saville, who had repeatedly invited her since Falkland's accession of fortune, for the speculation of obtaining Adelaide for one of Mrs. Saville's brothers.

"Not," she mentally said, "to make Helena her confidant. No, she would carefully conceal from her every unpleasant present occurrence, even those suspicions which Helena herself first awakened in her mind. No; her visit was for the judicious purpose of preventing annotations upon Adelaide's not being left under her protection; and also for the laudable project of giving back to Falkland's bosom some of those jealous pangs he had tortured hers with. Mr. Saville had been long her ardent lover, and beside, too, his house was the resort of the most dissipated of *haût ton*; and Falkland should, by this

clever step of hers, learn to tremble at the impolicy of forsaking his wife in the moment she believed she had full reason for her jealousy."

The idea of this phrensied measure once suggested, she promptly determined to adopt it; gave orders for preparations for her journey, and set about her own arrangements for it, writing a laconic epistle to her husband, informing him merely where to direct to her, should business demand his writing to her. A farewel note, of the same concise nature, she addressed to Lady Beechbrook, to be delivered the following day; and the only notice she determined upon taking of Mrs. Aspenfield and *her friend* Miss Bouverie was, when she knew they were at Beechbrook in the evening, to call on her road into Sussex, and drop her P. P. C. card with Frederick and his maid at the same time.

For two whole hours Rosalind was full of this danger-teeming project, when her thoughts began to waver on the propriety of it, and the natural feelings of her heart to sue for being heard, when unfortunately Mrs. Crow was announced, come under

the pretence of complaining of Falkland's conduct to her the preceding day, to add fresh fuel to an expiring flame; and, still more unfortunately, after the vile incediary's departure, going into Adelaide's boudoir to make that trial there which the contemptible meanness of Mrs. Crow advised, although her better feelings, recoiling from the inspection of any one's paper depositories, saved her from the suggested dishonourable action, she yet unluckily found a proof "strong as holy writ," in a fragment which had fallen from Adelaide's drawing-table, and had been picked up and laid in a conspicuous place of safety by the housemaids. It was, unequivocally, a performance of Adelaide's, since her hand-writing was there in evidence, tracing the motto. It was a head of Falkland, most striking in resemblance, and had been joined to another portrait by a heart in a beautifully fancied device, with the motto—"I animate both;" but from which the other portrait had been severed, only leaving part of a vail to identify its being a female's—Adelaide's, beyond all doubt; for beneath the

vail stood, in full testimony, A. H. Falkland, sculp.—"He had drawn her; she him; and one heart animated both."

Vain now was every effort of reason to be heard: envenomed passion, with torturing phrensy, bore down all before them; and in the sullen determination of her potent jealousy she carried her rash project into execution. She set off for Mr. Saville's; left Frederick and her card at her mother's, and her note for Lady Beechbrook, her letter for Falkland; the one to be delivered, the other for the post the following day.

As the maniac Rosalind intended, she keenly wounded the tender feelings of her inestimable husband; but not with jealous apprehension, for he was too firm in conviction of the purity of her heart and principles to sully or insult them by a suspicion. No; he was wounded to perceive her gentle nature so perverted—her softer feelings more remote from the surface than he had hoped to find them; and now agonizing conviction came, that by the harsh rod of correction only could she be restored to her former transcendent good-

ness; and now lost not a moment in accepting an embassy to ——, which ministry had only delayed for a proper missionary; and every thing being already in train, Falkland soon departed; but not until the moment of his embarkation was his reply to Rosalind's laconic epistle sent, to inform her of his destination; the term of his absence indefinite; and written with almost as much cool brevity as her own letter had been.

The grief, the consternation, the despair of Rosalind were not to be surpassed when she received this letter; her anguished heart bled in drops of agonizing repentance; and at Falkland's feet she would have humbled herself, humbled herself in the dust—to regain his affection, his confidence, she would have thought no sacrifice too great; but in the continued errors of her present clouded judgment she deprived herself of that consolation, which was in the hands of Mrs. Aspenfield, her husband's letter; for, unwilling to return to her mother, since her heart still obstinately closed out Adelaide from a reinstatement there, she was prevailed upon, by the art-

ful blandishments of the designing Helena, to delay her return to Kent from week to week.

Mr. Saville had become a *bon vivant*, who had lost all *tendresse* for Mrs. Falkland in his passion for the sensualities of the table: from him she had nothing to apprehend, but from others she had dangers and deep designs to fear; and on a direful precipice she blindly stood, hoodwinked by the arts of the subtile Helena.

CHAPTER XI.

Poor Adelaide clung to the performance of her promise to her parentally loved guardian with the scrupulous exactitude which a religious compact might claim, and with the most unabating exertions avoided all things that could nurture her grief to the injury of her health; but not to grieve for Falkland's absence, for his separation from his family, and for the afflicting cause, she found an impossibility. To mourn without despondence was now her successful aim; and, more accustomed to sorrow, she learned it could find a calm, yet deep, seat in the human heart.

But it cost the feelings of her gratitude many a struggle, to keep their ebullitions in subjection during the first gusts of Frederick's artless sorrow for the absence of his parents; and during which, her kindness, her caresses, only gave him consolation; and so much was this poor innocent's state like her own when she first

came beneath that very roof, that in her exertions to comfort the babe of Falkland for his deprivation of parents she retraced all her guardian's tenderness to herself; and the faithful records of her memory often almost subjugated the firmness she resolutely toiled to rear.

Two months had just elapsed since the embarkation of Falkland, when the post brought to Adelaide a letter from Lady Ambrosia, still dated Roscoville, and, as a most unprecedented condescension of his lordship's, franked by Lord Leyburn; when the amazed, the agitated Adelaide read as follows.

"MY VERY DEAR ADELAIDE,

"As some faint shadow of recompense for my misdemeanour towards you, I seize the opportunity of being first to communicate pleasing intelligence to you.

"Montagu, Earl of De Moreland, is arrived. How provoking he should come slap into into an earldom, and his brother not even acquire an honourable to his name!—He arrived long before he was

expected, having left Malta, on leave of absence, some weeks ere the letter containing the information of my uncle's death could have reached that place; so that he knew nothing of the matter until he arrived yesterday here, when he was unguardedly informed of my poor uncle's death by assassination; which so shocked him, that he bestowed no thought upon his own aggrandisement, but was thrown into such an alarming way that my poor, distracted Theodore was forced to call in medical aid before he could be arouzed from his horrid state of stupefaction, to move, or speak, or weep, or even know his brother; and this shock has so much unhinged his shattered nerves—for ill health has brought him home—that he has not since left his bed, though more composed than he was yesterday.

"There has been a fine piece of work relative to my uncle's will; for the one he made prior to his last departure has been stolen in a most miraculous manner from his lawyer, Mr. Coke, with whom his lordship left it. Mamma says 'there is an-

other will, which she shall be able to find, she doubts not, in a few days; and had she been aware of Montagu's speedy arrival, she would have sought for sooner:' but the mule of a lawyer says, 'there can be no other will, as his lordship told him that lost one was the only he ever made since his accession to the earldom; and that, unless the lost will can be found, every shilling of the property will devolve to you, except the small portion annexed to the title.'

"Mamma has taken to her bed, in consequence of some impertinent insinuations of Mr. Coke, and his insolence of reminding her of her illegitimacy precluding her from any interest in a property left to be claimed by the right of lawful succession.

"Montague hopes to be well enough to-morrow to write word of the loss of the will to Mr. Falkland, that he may promptly act for you; and Leyburn has just informed me, requesting my good offices, 'that if the fortune devolves to you he shall marry you.' But, my dear Adelaide, however appearances may tell against me,

I have too much affection for you not to forbid the bans. Marry Cyrus, and with joy I would then subscribe myself

"Your affectionate sister,

"as well as attached friend,

"AMBROSIA BOUVERIE."

Every sensation awakened in the bosom of Adelaide, on perusal of this letter, all sunk to inanity before the horrible one inspired by the intelligence so unceremoniously conveyed of her uncle's assassination; and not until her anguished grief had found temporary relief in a long and agonizing overflow of tears did any other part of Lady Ambrosia's letter awaken to her remembrance: then it was the afflicting information of Montagu's ill health, and no Falkland in England to restore him to convalescence, that arose first in painful recollection to be mourned for; and, after some longer indulgence to her distress, she struggled with the suppression of her feelings sufficiently to enable her to seek out Mrs. Aspenfield, to impart to her the contents of her cousin's letter.

Mrs. Aspenfield feelingly condoled with

her upon the dire fate of her uncle, since no individual could more sympathetically participate with her; and while thus employed, Lord Beechbrook was announced, whose spontaneously prompted inquiry, "if any new calamity had befallen poor Adelaide?" was answered by a statement of Lady Ambrosia's communications.

After his lordship's horror at hearing of the assassination of Lord De Moreland had a little subsided, he kindly said he was most happy to have a business of so advantageous a nature to transact for his temporary ward as Lady Ambrosia had anticipated.

"But, my lord," exclaimed Adelaide, with eagerness, "even should all this wealth devolve to me, remember, Mr. Coke's recollection of my uncle's lost wil must regulate my proceedings. The debts must be paid; all who have claims, equivalents for expected legacies; and poor Montagu twenty thousand a year at least."

"Why not at once, dear, generous Adelaide," said his lordship, smiling, "give the poor fellow all, by giving him yourself?"

"He might not wish for such an encum-

brance upon the estate," replied Adelaide, blushing; "but do not—do not, dear, dear Lord Beechbrook, talk of such things to me now, when the death-wound of my inestimable uncle has only just been opened in my heart."

"Forgive me, dear Adelaide," said his lordship, affectionately pressing her hand; but, you know, as your guardian, I must be obeyed; and as the friend of Mrs. Aspenfield, I expect her to be propitious. The days are so short, we have seen but little of each other lately, when we require the mutual cheering of each other's prized society. I therefore entreat you both, with our poor, deserted boy, to remove your quarters to Beechbrook to-morrow; when, beside making us happy, you will be in the way of hearing my discussions with the lawyers upon your affairs, Adelaide; and being on the spot, you can impart your wishes, and aid us with your advice."

Readily Mrs. Aspenfield assented to a proposition so likely to cheer the poor afflicted Adelaide; and shortly after his lordship departed.

To indulge Adelaide and herself in the

pleasure of her prattling grandson's company at dinner, Mrs. Aspenfield took that meal remarkably early when she had no stranger guests; so that even now, in the month of February, there was sufficient light after dinner to sanction Adelaide's proposition for her paying a farewel visit at the castle, to see that all was safe, and to renew her excluding charges relative to Mrs. Crow, since she knew not when she should return from Beechbrook; and on her arrival at the portal she was sorry to perceive, as she had not unfrequently done of late, the porter extremely inebriated, snoring off the fumes of smuggled spirits in his chair, and the gate left to the care of a young boy, his grandson; and upon inquiring for the housekeeper, she learned "that both she and the steward were gone to tea and *rubbers* with *Mrs. Crow's lady's* maid.

Adelade was disturbed at this intelligence, betraying dangerous intimacy; and Obearn, auguring no good from it, determined to go down the grounds to the gardener's house, where it was possible she

might obtain some useful information from Donald Blair and his wife, who were both firmly attached to Miss Bouverie.

Obearn now parting with her darling to proceed upon her embassy, Adelaide repaired to the library, where, on entering, her eyes instinctively sought the portrait of her uncle; but the curtain which was for shading it from dust was let down over it, excluding the picture from her view; when, not submitting to this disappointment of not beholding the semblance of a being so loved, so lost, she, with all the impetuosity of her enthusiastic feelings, rolled a ladder on the hearth, and, quickly mounting, removed the impeding shade; when, from the promptly circulating horror and distress which thrilled through her bosom at the recollection of the direful fate he died by, she burst into an agony of anguished tears; and now as she wept, laying her cheek against that of the inanimate resemblance, she repeatedly articulated, in plaintive murmurs, tender exclamations, expressive of her love and grief.

At length, after weeping and lamenting

thus for several agonized moments, Adelaide heard the door to the antichamber suddenly open, and in alarmed rapidity of descent she nearly fell from the ladder. A glaring light now emanated through the receding door, and she beheld Donald Blair enter with a scuttle of lighted coals, a billet of wood, and a bellows. Donald started, and looking inquisitively around, demanded abruptly—

"Gin she was alane?"

"Yes, Donald," Adelaide replied, hastily wiping her eyes, and endeavouring to speak with a steady voice: "you are very good for intending to light a fire for me; but I do not want one, as I shall not stay long."

"Lang, or na lang, Miss, tha feer will be geud for ye, and Ise mon leet it."

"Then, then let me cover my dear uncle's picture, lest the smoke should injure it," she hastily exclaimed, as she bounded up the ladder; when giving the portrait a hasty kiss, securely covered it with the curtain, and then descending, made way for Donald.

"By my geud troth! Miss Bouverie,"

exclaimed Donald, "ha every ane been as muckle grieved for mee laird as ye ha been, it would be bater for them naw."

"Every one had not such cause, good Donald," she replied, in a faltering voice, so indicative of rising grief that could scarcely be repressed, it called forth a look of sympathy from Donald, who, as he looked towards her, suddenly started, as if something had surprised him; and by the direction of his eyes led Adelaide to look too; when, to her utter dismay, she beheld a man, in the uniform of an Hungarian officer, slowly and cautiously advancing from an adjoining room.

"Dinna fear, Miss," exclaimed Donald, "na harm awaits ye: 'tis anely a mon come awa from a French prison, wha brings strange teedings, bra news of my geud laird."

"Oh! whoever you are, tell all, all to me!" exclaimed the now almost joy-phrensied Adelaide, hastening to meet the stranger; but ere an instant elapsed, her speed became that of the fleet lightning, and with a shriek of ecstasy she sunk, almost bereaved of every faculty, upon the bosom of her agitated uncle.

The faculties of Adelaide, eager to taste in full force the innovating sensations of happiness, soon rallied to the most animated perception; and in all the wild transport of her joy she kissed and rekissed her uncle, imploring him to tell her by what miracle he had escaped death and captivity; yet allowing him no opportunity of doing so, by the rapidity of her questions relative to his health.

"My dear, dear, enthusiastic child!" at length his lordship said, "read not my bill of health from my aspect, since that is affected merely by the fatigue and anxiety I have endured in accomplishing my escape; but set your affectionate heart at rest. Your Æsculapian guardian performed almost a miracle upon my shattered constitution; and even in the unwholesome confinement of a prison I have enjoyed better health infinitely than for many a year before I had to boast of."

"Ah! and this Æsculapian guardian is not now in England, my uncle, to set you up again, after all that fatigue and anxiety!"

"So I find from Donald: but your ten-

der care, I trust, my child, will be fully sufficient for that purpose. Donald has promised me some tea, to refresh me, after a most unpleasant sea voyage, which, with a good night's rest, will set me up, I trust, and enable me to pursue my route to Roscoville to-morrow."

"But you will take that rest at Mrs. Aspenfield's, where I now am staying, I hope, my dear uncle," said Adelaide, anxiously, "for I have no idea of the beds being kept well aired in the castle."

"Oh!" said his lordship, "although I defy the effect of damp beds now, after resting as I have done in hovels, in forests, in hay-lofts, on house-tops, while effecting my escape, yet shall I be most happy to accept accommodations at Mrs. Aspenfield's: but, good Donald, do pray hasten with my tea, and charge your wife again to preserve the secret of my arrival."

"Obearn is with Mrs. Blair," said Adelaide; "caution her too, since my uncle wishes for secrecy, and she will aid you in getting tea ready."

Donald now departed; when his lordship hastened to state, that from the in-

formation given to him by Donald (who was the only person he found on the premises when he arrived, about an hour before, save the drunken porter and a stupid boy), in consequence of his desiring an explanation of why seals were affixed on his paper deposits, he had reason to doubt the faith of the steward and housekeeper, and therefore he had determined to conceal his arrival from these venal tools of his avaricious sister until morning, when too late for them to anticipate his return to Roscoville, where he determined to proceed immediately, and ere there could be a moment given to Lady Leyburn to prepare for his reception.

"And you will accompany me to Roscoville, I trust, my love?" said his lordship." Indeed, after Donald's representation of your affliction for my supposed death; after the affecting proofs I witnessed myself, when fear of precipitating you by a dangerous surprise from the ladder alone withheld my flying to chase the grief of my affectionate child; I cannot, I feel, submit to the pain of a present separation."

Obearn now, with a countenance glowing with the joy she felt at one source of her beloved child's sorrow being removed, entered with some of the tea equipage, and in the rapturous tones of this joy spoke the effusions of her honest heart.

Lord De Moreland, infinitely pleased, as he looked upon her artless joy as a reflected beam from Adelaide, spoke kindly to her; and after asking her several gracious questions, Obearn at length ventured in return to make an interrogation herself, and say—

"Does not your lordship think Miss Bouverie very much grown, and not altered for the worse, although she has gone through so much since August last, she is not certainly in her best looks at present?"

"Gone through!" exclaimed his lordship, in alarm. "What has my child gone through?"

"Nothing, nothing material, nothing worth talking of, now you are returned to bless me," Adelaide eagerly replied. "Sometime, perhaps, I may tell you, when we have nothing else to talk of, these mighty things Obearn attaches importance

to, merely because she was so unreasonable to expect what she wished, that I should sail through life without one ruffled tide."

As Lord De Moreland perceived Adelaide seemed anxious to conceal from him what Obearn had alluded to, he would not give pain to her gentle bosom by a demand for explanation; yet all solicitude to learn all that concerned this dear child's welfare or menaced her happiness, he despatched Obearn to impart his return to Mrs. Aspenfield, and entreat from her kindness accommodation in her hospitable mansion for that night; and when Obearn came back with the acquiescence of politeness and hospitality, his lordship made no delay in hastening through the castle grounds to the habitation of Mrs. Aspenfield, who received him with the most cordial courtesy.

His lordship, in the course of the evening, sketched for Mrs. Aspenfield and the attentive Adelaide a brief history of his providential escape from prison the night before the fiat for his death was to have been carried into execution; when by missing Baronello in their place of rendezvous, gave to that faithful servant cause for be-

lief that the order for his death had been fatally executed; and soon from this narrative his lordship's auditors discovered, that to the agents of Mr. Mordaunt Lord De Moreland was indebted for his critical escape.

As Adelaide had now so unexpectedly and so happily to throw off her mourning drapery, the arrangement of her wardrobe for so speedy a journey to Roscoville called her from the presence of her uncle for nearly an hour, during which period he requested an explanation from Mrs. Aspenfield of Obearn's allusion to sufferings her dear child had undergone; when, unhesitatingly, she told him every circumstance relative to Theodore and Lady Ambrosia Bouverie, but to disclose all her own daughter had made her endure she recoiled from; but as a climax to Adelaide's griefs, mentioned Falkland having accepted a diplomatique mission, and the report of his lordship's death.

Lord De Moreland's indignation was most powerfully aroused against the dishonourable lover and perfidious friend; and though his sympathy for Adelaide was

sensibly awakened, yet he rejoiced that any thing terminated the projected union, which he felt displeased with Falkland for ever having sanctioned, until Mrs. Aspenfield exonerated him from inattention to his lordship's wishes, by announcing Montague Bouverie as the principal mover in the meditated alliance.

When Adelaide at length appeared, her uncle took her tenderly in his arms; and telling her he had learnt the source of her late distress, and that as he found the treacherous Ambrosia and her dishonourable husband were at Roscoville, he would not ask her to accompany him, if meeting them could in any way be unpleasant to her feelings.

Adelaide felt that she would give worlds to avoid going to Roscoville, since Montagu was there, and that Falkland had imparted to her Lord De Moreland's wishes relative to him; but as his lordship had so affectionately expressed his desire not to be separated from her by his journey, she determined to brave the unpleasant, awkward consciousness of her feelings, and attend him; deriving courage for this re-

solution from the certainty that Montague would promptly destroy her uncle's project, by disclosing to his lordship his attachment to another.

Although Lord De Moreland with reluctance relinquished the realized happiness he long had vainly sighed for of seeing and holding converse with his tenderly beloved niece, yet exhausted nature was arbitrary, and he was compelled at length to retire, when Dennis had the honour of officiating as his lordship's valet de chambre.

As Lord Beechbrook was the delegated guardian of Adelaide during the absence of Falkland, Lord De Moreland felt it as a duty of proper compliment himself to write to his lordship, "to thank him for his great goodness to his child, to prevent his unnecessary trouble with lawyers upon her account, and to entreat permission for her postponing her visit to Beechbrook, in order to cheer and comfort him in an unpleasant journey." And this letter he requested Dennis to deliver at an early hour on the morrow.

As soon as her uncle had retired for the

night, Adelaide requested Mrs. Aspenfield to write immediately to inform her dear guardian of her uncle's restoration to her; and then followed a most earnest supplication for her writing to Mrs. Falkland also, to tell her of the happy tidings; since, notwithstanding Mrs. Falkland's late unkindness to her, she was sure the intelligence would give her pleasure, and she should feel sensibly grieved at not paying her every attention, even in their direful separation.

Mrs. Aspenfield, after much intreaty, at length promised to write to her transgressing daughter; and then confessed to Adelaide how maternal feelings had led her to conceal from Lord De Moreland the reprehensible conduct of her child to her.

"But I feel dissatisfied with myself for this concealment," continued Mrs. Aspenfield; "I feel I was unjust to your immaculate innocence, and to-morrow I will summon up sufficient firmness to be the first relater of this horrid detail to his lordship; and being mother to the culprit maniac, my testimony must exonerate you from a shadow of censure."

"Oh! kind and generous friend! but yet, not yet inform him," exclaimed the gratefully agitated girl—"Do not unnecessarily lessen Mrs. Falkland in my uncle's exalted opinion of her: should he chance to hear this cruel calumny—and soon I shall know it, believe me—then you can have the goodness to write to him in attestation of my innocence."

Mrs. Aspenfield gratefully thanked Adelaide for this forbearance, and promised her prompt testimony should be ready whenever necessary.

Such literal compliance with his lordship's request of an early delivery of his letter poor Dennis evinced, that ere any of Mrs. Aspenfield's small party assembled to breakfast, Lord Beechbrook had arrived, to answer Lord De Moreland's letter in person.

Lord De Moreland not wishing to raise any commotion in the village of Seaview, by having his miraculous escape from death and a French prison made known whilst he remained in Kent, relinquished his intention of going to the castle, to deal poetic justice there; and gave the power

to a most respectable solicitor, recommended for the purpose by Lord Beechbrook, to dismiss Mr. Lawyer Gabble, with the steward, housekeeper, and all whom faithful Donald had informed his lord were engaged with Mrs. Crow in searching the castle for papers, from their respective places of trust; and to make every necessary arrangement for providing more trusty domestics in their stead.

But only just to negotiate this necessary step did Lord De Moreland think it prudent to delay his departure after breakfast; so apprehensive was he of having his arrival anticipated at Roscoville any efficient length of time auspicious to his sister's politics: and the carriage of Mrs. Aspenfield lent to his lordship, for his journey, being at length in readiness, Lord De Moreland took a kind, a cordial, and grateful leave of his amiable hostess and Lord Beechbrook.

Frederick Falkland had been sent at an early hour to Beechbrook, to spare his parting pangs with Adelaide; who, not quite happy in the idea of leaving him even in the care of Lady Beechbrook and his

adoring grandmother, entreated, with a faltering voice and tearful eyes, as she took her affectionate leave of Mrs. Aspenfield and Lord Beechbrook, that she might be sent for express, should her darling little brother be ill again.

CHAPTER XII.

Lord De Moreland and his lovely niece at length set off in Mrs. Aspenfield's chaise, and Obearn and Dennis in a hired one, for Roscoville; and as from the shortness of the days, and not setting out at early dawn, they could not reach their place of destination that night, they stopped at Shooter's-hill for repose, and set out by eight o'clock the following morning, that they might arrive at the abbey in good time.

As they drew near to Roscoville, Adelaide's apprehension of the effect her uncle's unexpected appearance might have upon poor Montagu became so powerful, that she could not restrain the impulse of reminding his lordship of how much his heir presumptive had been overpowered by the shock of hearing of his death; and that, therefore, his susceptibility ought not to be too suddenly assailed.

"Our thoughts coalesce, my love!" replied his lordship, smiling, "for mine

have been engaged this half hour upon this very subject; and the method I have devised to avert our apprehensions is, to stop at my solicitor's, at M——, whilst he goes to announce my existence to my dear, affectionate Montagu."

They accordingly proceeded to Mr. Coke's, who was not at home; but as his return was shortly expected, his lordship and Adelaide entered the house, to await his arrival; and scarcely had they done so, when Montagu and Theodore Bouverie, in the latter's curricle, drove up to the door; and whilst they were inquiring for Mr. Coke, Dennis, who was standing near the chaise he had arrived in, was recognised by Montagu, who kindly summoned him to approach.

"I thought I was not mistaken, Dennis," he said, "although your being mounted on two handsome legs rather puzzled me."

"Och! then more grief to me, if it is not rejoiced myself is at seeing your honour, and good luck to you *onest* more!" exclaimed Dennis, in grateful rapture; "but my being mounted on my compliment of legs need never have been puzzling

you a morsel. Sure, don't I live with the sweetest of charity's *childer*, who supplies all the wants of the distressed? And sure 'twas herself, the bright jewel of pity, who gave me this elegant leg, for fear I would be laughed at any more by the London *futmen* at Seaview, whom I was forced, by my boiling blood, to keep knocking down *whin* they jeered at my badge of honour."

"*Dear* Adelaide!" exclaimed Montagu, emphatically. "But how is she, tell me?"

"Why then, indeed, she is bravely, Sir; that is, as well as can be expected after her late——" surprise he was going to say, but suddenly recollecting the seal of secrecy was on his lips, he added, "that is, I mean, your honour, after her fatigue in travelling from Seaview."

"Then she is at M——," exclaimed Bouverie, alighting from the curricle:—"where, where shall I find her?"

"Ah! then, be easy, your honour, now, if you please," said Dennis, motioning for him not yet to proceed. "Sure I can't be letting you come plump before her eyes, without so much as *mintioning* your name, to overwhelm her with another big and joy-

ful surprise. Herself is in the house of one Mr. Coke, and will I just be slipping up to announce your honour?"

"Do so, but step out, my fine fellow. But who is with her?" said Montagu, examining the arms on Mrs. Aspenfield's carriage.

"Och! sure that's the big secret, Sir."

"Adelaide on a secret expedition!" exclaimed Montagu, colouring. "Then I must not intrude."

"Sorrow morsel of intrusion will it be at all, at all, when *oncet* they are prepared for surprising you with what will be making your heart glad, if I mistake not the nature of it."

Dennis now disappeared, and quickly returned to conduct the wondering Montagu to the presence of Adelaide, whom Lord De Moreland now deputed to announce his existence and return, while his lordship withdrew into an adjoining room.

Adelaide was advancing with extended hand to meet her early friend, and Montagu darting forward with extended arms to receive her in them, when they each stopped short on their way; Adelaide's ad-

vance arrested by a painful thrill of grief on beholding the once blooming Bouverie so pale, so attenuated, so evidently out of health; whilst his was checked by amazement on beholding her matured into the most lovely being he had ever seen, and not the Adelaide of his brother's delineation, portrayed in awkward excuse forh is dereliction of her.

"Alas! Mr. Bouverie!" she mournfully said, as she resumed her movement towards him, "you have been ill indeed! Can grief for my dear uncle have thus subdued you?"

The deepest tints of crimson flushed the before pale cheeks of Montagu; but he rushed forward, caught her in his arms with the tender embrace of an affectionate brother, and endeavoured, as he did so, to suppress an agonising sigh.

With blushing, timid grace, Adelaide now gently disengaged herself from the arms of Montagu, and motioned to a seat; when, without relinquishing her trembling hand, he took the seat he had been invited to beside her, and was trying for a steady voice (which her allusion to the cause of his illness had paralyzed), to inquire for

the Falklands, when Adelaide, all anxiety to execute her arduous undertaking, inquired—

"Would not Mr. Theodore Bouverie allow his new cousin the pleasure of congratulating him both on his marriage and on the safe return of a brother she knew he tenderly regarded?"

"He understood from Dennis," Montagu replied, in a tone of embarrassment, well divining that his brother could not very much relish the presence of a being he had behaved so ill to, "that you had some reason for wishing not to have known who were the companions of your journey hither."

"Dennis was a little mistaken," said Adelaide, smiling, "since nothing have I so much at heart at present as your introduction to the companion of my journey; but as I have first something of a very interesting nature to impart, something which in your weak state of health may too much agitate you, will you forgive the anxiety of a very old friend, who knowing how unexpected intelligence lately subdued you, if I wish for the presence of your

brother?" And Adelaide now pulled the bell.

Montagu, penetrated by the melting tones of her voice, as they thrilled in pity's gentle kindness to his heart, in the impetuosity of uncontrollable feeling exclaimed—

"Oh, Adelaide! still the same, sweet, gentle child of kind compassion! How have the visions of my fancy, on my voyage from Malta, portrayed you thus, when in my reveries I have believed that in the genial air of Seaview, with Falkland for my physician, and, as a suffering fellow being, sharing the pitying care of my sweet sister Adelaide, I might be restored to that lost blessing, health."

At this moment the bell was answered; the agitated Adelaide gave her message for Theodore; and then replied to Montagu, by informing him of her guardian being unfortunately gone on a diplomatique mission to ——.

Bouverie, knowing Falkland's fond attachment to his wife, felt overwhelmed with amazement at this intelligence; and the ingenuous Adelaide found some difficulty in answering those questions his asto-

nishment inspired; and most glad she was when the reluctant, embarrassed Theodore entered, to suspend the puzzling interrogations of his brother.

Adelaide, with strikingly easy grace, congratulated Theodore upon his twofold cause of joy, and then inquired for Lady Ambrosia.

"Although," she added, "I need not expend much time, now called into requisition for another purpose, by making inquiries for her whom I shall shortly see, being on my way to spend a few days at Roscoville."

"At Roscoville! Then, by all that is happy, Lord De Moreland, your uncle, my beloved, inestimable friend, yet lives!" exclaimed Montagu, starting from his seat with all the unfeigned animation of enthusiastic joy. "Oh! keep me not one moment in suspense, dear Adelaide, I conjure you."

"Assuredly our hopes are raised almost to certainty," she replied.

"Oh! yes, yes, to certainty! for you are not in mourning, Adelaide; and only with your uncle would you go to Roscoville, I know full well:—then, dear, dear

Adelaide, delay not the confirmation of this happy tidings. Tell me I anticipate truly his being in this very house, that I may fly to embrace him, and give him the welcome of an attached heart."

Adelaide, no longer alarmed for Montagu, pointed to a door, which as he was flying to open, Lord De Moreland, who had from his situation heard all, and as impatient as Bouverie himself to meet, anticipating his aim, stood in the doorway, and received him in his arms.

And now, as Montagu stood clasped to her uncle's bosom, his pale, attenuated countenance illumined by the joy his heart experienced at this restoration of a friend, although that restoration deprived him of rank and consequence, Adelaide thought she had never before beheld a being half so interesting.

"But how came you to frighten poor Adelaide and myself nearly out of our precious lives," at length Montagu cheerfully said, "by the direful report of your horrid massacre? And how came you here, a miracle of Galvanism, to cheer us with the cordial of great joy?"

"And how," demanded Lord De Moreland, "came you here so opportunely, my affectionate, disinterested Montagu, when we were at our wit's ends to convey a private message to you?"

"I came out airing for the first time, to be in training for my meditated expedition to Seaview," Montagu replied, "where I was panting to go; since there"— and his voice now faltered—"I thought I might regain my health."

"And there you shall go without delay, my dear fellow," said his lordship. "You shall accompany me in a very few days to De Moreland Castle. I will arrange my business at Roscoville as speedily as possible, that you may not be detained from the spot you think will prove salubrious to you."

"No, my lord, no, pray do not hurry. Remember Falkland is not there; and with you, Adelaide, and my brother, at Roscoville, I shall find that place, believe me, the most genial to my health."

Theodore Bouverie, who had never before seen Lord De Moreland, now found himself in a most comfortless situation

his brother, in the ecstasy of his joy, forgot to introduce him to his lordship, and he felt too conscious of the culpability of his late conduct to dare to ask for an introduction to the uncle of his wife; but Adelaide, never inattentive to the feelings of others, with all the sweet philanthropy of her nature, reminded Montagu of his omission; when Theodore's presentation took place, who, in the coolly civil reception his lordship gave him, clearly read Lord De Moreland's opinion of his late proceedings.

Lord De Moreland being impatient to reach Roscoville, that he might the sooner quit it, now proposed their proceeding thither; when Theodore assumed courage to request leave to anticipate them a little, to have the existence and near approach of her brother gently announced to Lady Leyburn, who was extremely ill.

"His lordship had no objection," he said, "to having his *avant-coureur* such a one as would prevent any unpleasant consequences from a too sudden surprise to her ladyship, provided he allowed his brother to remain with him."

"For I cannot yet," he added, "find firmness to endure the thought of separation one moment from my Montagu and my Adelaide, for they seem the most precious part of the blessings of my restored liberty."

"Theodore, happy to escape from the presence of Adelaide and her uncle, flew off to his curricle, and in full speed proceeded with his intelligence extraordinary; his fleet way soon retraced by his lordship and his beloved companions to Roscoville, where now reigned commotions, consternations, and apprehensions in no common degree, yet mingled with joy of no trivial nature in one bosom, where least of all it might be expected—even in the breast of Lady Leyburn.

Foiled in all her manœuvring, through the loss of the key, and the positive affirmation of Mr. Coke that the lost will was the only one her brother had made as Lord De Moreland, the long panted for death of her brother fell as a stroke of misfortune rather than the reverse; and terror lest all that golden harvest she had plowed and sown through every soil of iniquity to reap

should be wrested from her by the hated child of her still more hated brother Montagu and the abhorred Ellen, had overpowered her nerves, and sunk her, in the malady of disappointed hope, and apprehension of exposure, to her bed; from which the intelligence of her brother's existence and near approach recalled her by influence almost like magic in its operation, for hope was restored to her bosom.

She might now recover the gold key, and find her way to the secret recess. She now would obtain, at least, the moiety of the profits on her late grandfather's debts, as stipulated with certain of his creditors, and she should still be left to revel as mistress of Roscoville Abbey until all her plots and projects were ready for fruition; and with all the elasticity of new born strength and revived expectation she darted from her bed, to prepare for her brother's reception; and giving, as she dressed, her directions for proceeding to the vile paramour her vices, not her choice, had chained her to; who, from the moment hope's projects ceased to anticipate success, had thrown off the mask of tenderness and subserviency,

to act the stern tyrant; and who now, in Proteus capability, resumed his gentleness, his ardent passion, since again he beheld a rich harvest in perspective.

The first now of all their policy's manœuvring was to send off instantly all the inmates from Roscoville whose presence might awaken unpleasant surmises, and which were composed of the family and friends of Mr. Blackthorn; and the first of whom her ladyship requested—for she dare not command it—to depart was Mr. Daniel Blackthorn, whose daring insolence of manner she doubted not would lead Lord De Moreland to demand explanations which it would pose her to make, consistent with Lady Seraphina's prudence or her own honour: but although Mr. Blackthorn, for similar motives, wished for the temporary absence of his son also, yet to succeed in realizing this wish neither found influence; for as the father was, as well as her ladyship, in this young man's power, the parental authority was lost in fear, and the speculating Mr. Daniel sturdily remained; for as proof had lately been given, in the stolen will which he had in possession, that Lady

Seraphina had no chance of sufficient fortune to compensate for marrying a woman he was weary of, and that this Miss Bouverie who was coming would inherit immense property, new plans had entered his head, which he resolved to stand his ground, and carry into effect, if possible.

Lord De Moreland arrived ere the toilet of Lady Leyburn could be made, so that she was not in the hall to receive him, but her son and daughters were, all instructed to affect the most unbounded joy at his restoration to them; and the ease with which Lady Ambrosia met her cousin, for the first time after her climax of deception had been practised, might have astonished all who were unacquainted with the school she had been reared in: but however mild and forgiving Adelaide was, she yet had firmness of mind sufficient to lead her to steadiness in her discrimination; and the reception she gave to Lady Ambrosia's easy greeting was not the heart-directed one of friendship that had not been deceived.

Ladies Seraphina and Celestina, by orders from their mother, received "their charming cousin" most cordially; and Lord Ley-

burn with a groveling redundancy of innovating civility, as Mr. Daniel, who was become his lordship's oracle, had sworn most vehemently, as he obtained a view of Adelaide alighting from the carriage—"That the man who obtained her would be the favourite of love as well as fortune!" to the no small rage of Lady Seraphina; although her ladyship most sincerely repented her engagement to Mr. Daniel Blackthorn ever since the return of Montagu Bouverie, whom her heart, struggling with the depravity it had imbibed, thought an infinitely preferable object, even without the alluring addition of a coronet; and had actually ventured to hint to her temporary favourite, that very morning, her fears their entanglement being a foolish one, teeming with mutual ruin.

As Adelaide's arrival at Roscoville was, like her uncle's, a most unexpected event, no apartments had been previously assigned for her; but Lady Ambrosia, with eager zeal, obtained a most commodious one for her lovely cousin, and was most conspicuous in striving to oblige her in every possible way; for notwithstanding the appa-

rent ease of her ladyship's manner, she was terrorized at the appearance of Adelaide, to whom, although she would not yield the palm of beauty, yet to herself she acknowledged her great superiority in mental endowments; and the resumption of her power over the heart of the highly informed Theodore she trembled at, as a possible event; and she thought the wisest policy would be to conciliate this dreaded rival, and if she could win her to forgive past transgressions, she felt persuaded would, in the goodness of her heart, strive to throw her into every advantageous light rather than exert her influence to eclipse her: and, independent of this interested policy, she loved Adelaide as much as the *rivalité* of her insatiate vanity would allow her to regard so dangerous a competitor, and she could not feel happy while bereft of her esteem; for whilst she had enjoyed it she experienced a sort of pleasing mental consequence, which she now languished for again.

"Oh, Adelaide!" she exclaimed, the first moment opportunity in their being alone was afforded to her, "you sweetly,

kindly told me in your letter that you forgave my winning Theodore from you; then why, oh! why is the misery for me to perceive I have lost your affection, your esteem?"

"Most certainly I forgave your winning Theodore from me," Adelaide steadily replied; "but I did not tell you in my letter that you held the same place in my estimation you occupied ere you deceived my unsuspecting friendship, nor was the letter you first wrote to me from hence likely to aid in restoring you to it.—You look amazed, Ambrosia. Can it be possible nothing whispered through your bosom, that treating the most execrable of profligates with flattering distinction, degrading to delicacy and purity of heart, while one of the most exemplary penitents who ever undeviatingly trod the path of contrition met from you the ridicule which only the most contemptible could deserve, was likely to lessen you in the esteem of those who so well knew the peace-assassin Walton and the amiable Mellifont as I did?"

"Heavens! Adelaide! You did not, surely, suspect me of any thing improper

relative to that odious sea-bear?" exclaimed Lady Ambrosia, resentfully.

"You sent me yourself incontrovertible conviction of something very improper relative to him; for did not you permit his talking upon the heinous subject of his vices to you? Did nothing in the form of woman's sensitive, yet impenetrable, shield arise to ward off the licentious record of libertine exploits?"

"Oh! yes, my husband's jealous anger arose to oppose it; and after Theodore's extreme displeasure I did all I could to discourage him, and made it a point never to speak to him at all when Theodore was present."

"Oh, Ambrosia! and was it only in the presence of your husband you acted on the reserve to this noxious animal, who, like the poisonous breath of pestilence, sweeps health and peace from the dwelling where he enters; spreading devastation wider even than war, than plague, than famine? You, Ambrosia, who acted with so much firmness in delicacy and propriety relative to Mr. Daniel Blackthorn."

"Yes, Adelaide; but Blackthorn I never

heard was admired by any one but Seraphina, while, on the contrary, Walton was robed in all the fascinations of fashionable eclat."

Adelaide now replied with all the force of argument her purity of heart, her enlightened intellect, her inherent and improved piety supplied her with, to point out the culpability, the folly of such a pernicious encouragement to vice; nor did she cease until she made her cousin shed tears, less however, we believe, of genuine penitence than of vexation at having, she feared, from Adelaide's delineation of her conduct, led a profligate, insignificant, and vain libertine to conceive every thing flattering to his self love, every thing degrading to her principles and affection for her husband, whom she told Adelaide she had every reason to believe was a most jealous one.

"For you must know," she added, "he is jealous to absurdity of even my own family; as the state of misery he is always in when I have any private conferences with them is really ridiculous, always devising methods to interrupt them; and most

anxious he is to persuade me to leave Roscoville, and shut myself up for life with him in a cottage he has, unluckily, in the New Forest. I suppose he will be mad jealous of you too.

"And besides this jealous tendency, I really fear he is a monstrous miser, for he has told me, more than once, I must not think of the profusion of Roscoville when we go to our cottage; and then, only think, he has given me but one paltry hundred pounds for myself since we married. And then, too, he hates London, dotes on the insipidity of a country interment, and is always raving of when we go to our cemetery in the New Forest, 'that he is to be at his studies and I at my domestic employments—churning and spinning, I suppose—all our mornings, except at our intervals for taking exercise: then in the evenings of winter he is to read to me—family receipts, I warrant—while I work, patching the family clothes, I doubt not.' Did you, now, ever hear of such plodding doings? Oh! and he hates dancing, and abominates cards.

"Ah! had I ever suspected Theodore to

be such a humdrum, I would have combated with my inclinations; but how could I possibly tell his disposition in so short an acquaintance, and in another person's house too? Certainly Lord Aberavon was my congenial soul, and I fear I shall find reason to repent my not waiting for the offer he got introduced to Lord Beechbrook to make for me."

Adelaide, shocked at this early prospect of blighted happiness, and trembling for her thoughtless and unsteady cousin's peace, feelingly advised her to comply with her husband's wish as speedily as possible to fly from Roscoville, where the dissipated contagion that reigned must prove ungenial to domestic happiness.

"Why that I believe," Lady Ambrosia replied; "and I am convinced a great deal depends upon the people you are with the turn your mind takes; for, do you know, when I was at Mordaunt Priory and Beechbrook, Iused really to thin kdomestic felicity not so bad a thing by any means, and therefore, led on by that idea, I married as I did: but, to be sure, if mamma succeeds in making Theodore a peer, all, except his

humdrum propensities, will be well; and even if she does not get him this peerage, Seraphina will marry ten times worse, that is one comfort; and then, if you and Celestina should marry—"

"Ill also for your comfort, Ambrosia, what a happy woman that would make you!" said Adelaide, smiling expressively.

"Ah! Adelaide," her ladyship replied, blushing, "I am not like you, with a heart that feels every thing as heavenly influence dictates, and which even guides your most spontaneous sentiments."

CHAPTER XIII.

Lady Leyburn's joy at her brother's return was for once unfeigned, yet his lordship gave her no credit for its sincerity; and seeing Mr. Blackthorn still in her suite, with his son too as an additional abhorrent object to him, Lord De Moreland determined to be as prompt as possibility would admit of in his departure from Roscoville; but ere he went, to arrange for his sister's speedy removal to a hunting seat of his in Norfolk, which he would present to her for her life, and to devolve to Cyrus at her decease; and to expedite all these meditated arrangements, he sent to appoint Mr. Coke's attendance on the subsequent day; and ere he obeyed the summons of the dinner bell he sent off an express to poor Baronello to announce his existence, and to request his resumption of his station in his lordship's service.

At this day's dinner, although many of the individuals present exerted themselves to sustain the part their several specula-

tions had marked out for them, yet this repast went off heavily; and Adelaide, annoyed by the obtrusive civilities of Lord Leyburn and Mr. D. Blackthorn, felt most happy when it terminated; and in the evening Lady Ambrosia, glad of an opportunity of evincing kindness to her cousin in which her vanity was not called upon to make a sacrifice, readily planned and succeeded, with Montagu Bouverie as an auxiliary, to secure poor Adelaide from the fulsome attentions of these plotting profligates; and in conversation with her ladyship and Montagu she chiefly passed the fleeting moments, sometimes joined by Theodore, who, encouraged by her easy converse with his wife, ventured even to address our heroine with decreasing embarrassment; yet still at intervals retiring within himself in pensive musing, not satisfied with his own conduct, and fearing that to repent his rash union would be his future destiny.

About half an hour previous to the time appointed by Lord De Moreland for Adelaide's attending his *dejeûne* the subsequent morning, she was much surprised by a visit from Lady Ambrosia, who entered in her

robe de chambre, and evidently in high spirits.

"Look!" she exclaimed, holding out a bank note for fifty pounds, "what Theodore has just given me to equip myself, now I am to throw off my mourning; and instead of being jealous of you, he quite approves of my attachment to you; and think what he says—but no, I won't tell, it would make you so vain."

Adelaide smiled. "Your husband, Ambrosia," she replied, "must say a number of extravagant things in my praise ere he can encourage my poor discomfited vanity to raise its diminished head again."

"Very true," exclaimed her ladyship, with an exulting air; "therefore I will tell you that he says, 'your friendship will confer more honour on me than all the titles in the world, and will prove of more value to me than all the riches of Golconda:' and when I promised him to do my best to reinstate myself in your affection, without another word he gave me this fifty pounds I had been teasing him for, and which he told me 'he could not well afford to spare; for, having disobliged the Clydes, we had

only eight hundred a year in the world to do every thing; and as he should be extremely shocked and distressed not to keep a carriage for me, he was under the necessity of intreating me to economize in trifles, that we might afford ourselves essentials:' but now, dear Adelaide, that I have got this money, do tell me what I shall lay it out upon?"

"Why, surely, upon what you so very much wanted as to induce your teasing your husband to give you so much money when it was inconvenient to him to spare it," Adelaide replied.

"Why, as to that, you know, one always likes to have money to spend; but now really I cannot tell what I shall strike out to purchase, not being in town to see tempting things; for you supplied me so handsomely ere I married, and Theodore's hundred pounds, and mamma's beautiful presents since, that I cannot say I—I very much want any thing. It would not, I know, buy a necklace like that you wore the last day we met at Beechbrook, or I should soon decide; but as it cannot reach that summit of my wishes, you, Adelaide,

shall strike out something for me now that shall make me look still more lovely in the eyes of Theodore."

"Will you absolutely allow me to name the purchase, Ambrosia?"

"Absolutely, on honour."

"Then buy the horse, and present it to your husband, which I heard him last night express to you so much regret at being forced to relinquish all thoughts of indulging his wish for, since its proprietor would not take less than fifty guineas for it."

Lady Ambrosia hesitated, and her brow did not wear an auspicious serenity.

"Nay, Ambrosia, did you not wish to purchase something to make you appear still more lovely in the eyes of Theodore? An erring impulse of youthful thoughtlessness led you to an unreasonable demand upon the prudence-fettered generosity of your husband; then turn it from an unamiable to an amiable aspect; and in reciprocation of the sentiment which gave the fifty pounds to you, restore it in a grateful form to Theodore."

"But the price of the horse is guineas; I have only pounds."

"Only write to this colonel who has this steed to dispose of, stating that you have just fifty pounds to spare, and wishing to surprise your husband with a present of a horse he likes, and so forth—I make no doubt but this son of Mars will have sufficient gallantry graciously to abate his shillings, to oblige you."

"But you must write the note."

"The copy, certainly, if you wish it."

Adelaide did so, and Lady Ambrosia retired to copy it; and although excessively elated at the idea of raising herself in her husband's admiration, yet not a little chagrined at not having any part of the fifty pounds spared to adorn her beauteous self.

Adelaide breakfasted *tête-à-tête* with her uncle, as Montagu was yet too much an invalid to join their party; and when this repast was ended, Lord De Moreland began to arrange some papers for the inspection of Mr. Coke; and whilst his lordship was thus employed he talked unrestrainedly of his suspicions of Lady Leyburn's integrity, and of his intention of making no delay in replacing the will that had so mysteriously disappeared.

Adelaide, encouraged by this mention of his lordship's will, ventured to plead for the pardon of Lady Ambrosia, that she might hold the same place in her uncle's kindness she had done when he made his former bequests.

"And," she added, "could I devise any method of delicately managing it, I should be quite happy to give Ambrosia an annuity, since Mr. Bouverie, by forfeiting the favour of Lord Clyde, and by his wife's fortune bearing no interest until she comes of age, has a very small income."

"So much the better, my dear, generous, forgiving child!" replied his lordship: "and as to your making an allowance to feed the extravagance of Ambrosia, I make it a point you do not. No, my Adelaide, let us not encourage, by our mistaken generosity, the ungrateful and dishonourable. However, as she was your *protegée*, and as it may gratify your delicacy to give proof you bear no enmity to her for depriving you of a most unfit husband, I will not object to your making her a wedding present; and I will give you a draft upon my banker that shall enable you

to make her one, though far beyond what she merits, yet, perhaps, inferior to what she may think the heiress of Lord De Moreland ought to give: but Adelaide, my love! I would ever have you discriminate in your generosity, and let the deserts of those you give to operate upon the bounty of your hand."

The confirmation from her uncle's own testimony that she was to be his heiress, with the parental interest he evinced for her, by taking the trouble to advise her, failed not in their lively effect upon the grateful heart of Adelaide; but a look, expressive of her feelings, was all she had an opportunity to attempt, since Montagu Bouverie at this moment entered, who, after paying his morning compliments, directly took a vacant seat by Adelaide.

"By the visible improvement in your aspect since yesterday, I am inclined to think, my dear Montagu, you will soon set all nurses at defiance," said his lordship.

"Oh! I am infinitely better. I knew I should be so when I ceased to breathe the, to me, pernicious air of Malta," Bouverie replied, with a struggling sigh.

"Aye," returned Lord De Moreland, smiling gratefully and affectionately at him, "but you knew not that on your arrival in England the goodness of your disinterested heart was to overpower you with illness, because you heard you had obtained a peerage."

"It was a horrid report, and told so incautiously that certainly it came with a stunning bang to my heart, sure enough; just as if I cared for you," returned Bouverie, cheerfully. "But I hope your business here is not to detain you a hundred years, since I feel a sort of childish longing to get to De Moreland Castle with you: I think we shall be so comfortable there.—Pray is—is not Adelaide to live with you now, my lord?"

The manner in which this question was asked suffused the cheeks of Adelaide with as bright a blush as ever mantled there; and instantly a deep crimson tint was reflected back on the whole countenance of Montagu.

At this moment, and ere Lord De Moreland could articulate his reply, which was preceded by an arch smile, Dennis rushed

into the room, with a countenance inflamed with rage, that made his whole frame vibrate with emotion.

"I ax ten thousand pardons, my lord," he almost inarticulately exclaimed, "for taking upon myself the toleration of being mad before you; but sorrow help can I help that same, and who can be wondering if I am foaming with red hot flames of fury, when that carrion Crow, and bad luck to her! should dare to have the insolence to be taking liberties with the *darlingt* child I helped to rear? Och! och! thunder and licksticks! brimstone and faggots! if your lordship will not be mad too when you come to be hearing all, I wonder what's what!

"You must know, my lord, they have such blacking in this house, 'tis not fit for the dog's shoes, let alone christians; so I just stepped down to the village yonder, beyont there, and got proper ingredients to make some that would be neat and sweet, and too fond of its station to soil the *darlingt*'s coat when she would be going in the carriage with you, with which I would clean your lordship's shoes myself."

"I am most extremely obliged for this kindness, good Dennis; but pray what analogy can cleaning shoes have to Miss Bouverie and Mrs. Crow?" said his lordship.

"I'll engage it has, my lord; for how would myself have ever come by a letter *sould* for waste paper by the maids here, if I had not gone to the huxter's to buy ingredients for blacking? Look there, my lord, at what was wrapped round the lamb-black. 'Tis not fit for your lordship to be touching with a pair of tongs, so I'll be holding at a respectful distance this villanous performance for you to read. Och! to be sure, I did not know Mrs. Alice Crow's pot-hooks and hanger the moment I clapt eyes on her distortions!" And now holding a part of a very dirty letter at the proposed respectful distance, his lordship read as follows—

"MY LADY,

"I am very much troubled indeed to tell you, my lady, that after having succeeded so well in working up that silly Mrs. Falkland into frantic jealousy of her husband and his ward, that your wish, my lady,

is not likely to be gratified; for instead of the jealous wife routing the suspected ward, and leading her gladly to accept your intended offer of protection, Falkland has gone off in a rage from his wife, for fear, too, any more scandal should be spread about Miss Bouverie, and has, I hear, obtained a diploma to practice abroad; and though thus you have, my lady, most unexpectedly got rid of him who would have been always a stumbling-block in the way of your maternally kind intentions about your niece, yet he has almost thrown us out of the frying-pan into the fire, for he has left her in the guardianship of Lord Beechbrook, who is another *as* one cannot easily outwit; and has fixed her to reside with Mrs. Falkland's mother, who is as shrewd and cunning as a rat, my lady; and which is such creditable protection for her, presenting such *a* antidote to any future poisons you may wish me to circulate, that I fear nothing can entice her from it to accept of yours, my lady, though——"

"Diabolical fiends!" exclaimed Montagu, with violent indignation.

"Adelaide," said his lordship, powerfully agitated, "is this vile fragment a faithful chronicle of late events?"

"Oh! forgive me, my uncle, for concealing one large portion of my late misery from you!" she replied, throwing herself upon his bosom, and bursting into tears. "But though urged to tell you by Mrs. Aspenfield, I could not bear to lessen Mrs. Falkland in your estimation, and Lord Beechbrook did not disapprove of my silence."

"But I do; for where a matter so momentous as the slander of reputation was in question, you should not have concealed it from me, my injured child;" said his lordship, tenderly pressing her to his bosom.

"Will I leave this dirty letter, my lord? —dirty in every way, and bad luck to the inditer of it!" said Dennis, feeling, from an inherent impulse of propriety, that he ought to withdraw.

"Assuredly leave it, my good fellow; and perhaps you might obtain for us from the same source," replied his lordship, "the remainder of this diabolical letter, to

supply us with the superscription and signature. Here is some gold, try the power of that to gain our point; and as you evinced so much discretion in bringing this fragment immediately to me, I think I may depend upon your not naming it or its contents to any one."

"Och! then, is it to spread evil reports of the *darlingt* of the wide world? Villanous scan mag, of one who is as unblemished in thought or deed as the falling snow ere it drops on the earth to meet a sully, that I would be turning bellman, my lord? Och! more grief to me! if ever I mintion its contents to man or mortal, or as much as the babe unborn; no, not even barring Norah Obearn, who, for that matter, myself has been in love with seventeen years come Miss Adelaide's christening-day, though I never let on a word of that same to her—in proof I can be silent where descrition shuts my mouth; knowing 'twas no use to be making love, since sorrow listen will she listen to it from my betters even until Miss Adelaide is married, and her first child weaned."

Dennis now departed on his mission,

having scarcely awakened a smile in his auditors at his constancy and forbearance in love, so much were their minds occupied by the malevolence of Mrs. Crowe and the sinister designs of the cruel Lady Leyburn, whom all doubted not the letter was addressed to: and the moment Dennis retired, Lord De Moreland requested Adelaide to give a full and faithful narrative of all the malice that diabolical letter alluded to.

Adelaide obeyed; and in her painful narrative portrayed all as leniently for Mrs. Falkland as possibility would admit of, and concluded by requesting her uncle to write to Mrs. Aspenfield for her exoneration from censure.

"Which she voluntarily promised me," said the agitated Adelaide; "and no one can be applied to more fairly by me; since, being the fond, the partial mother of Mrs. Falkland, none can suspect her of censuring her daughter unjustly to vindicate me."

"Oh! celestially minded Adelaide!" exclaimed Montagu, with enthusiasm, "and after such unkindness (which, if re-

lated by any other narrator, we should find that in justice we must term cruelty and insult), after such a barbarous attempt at the assassination of your fame, how, oh! how could you feel inspired with such forbearance towards Mrs. Falkland?"

"Because, Mr. Bouverie," she replied, with tremulous emotion, "unkindness could not obliterate from my memory her former goodness to me; when, like my own tender mother, she instructed me; when, like my own tender mother, she anxiously nursed me in sickness; when, like that mother, she made my griefs her griefs, and resented with all the warmth of an affectionately attached heart every slight that was shown to me."

"Ah, Adelaide!" said Lord De Moreland, "well might Obearn say 'you had gone through sufficient since last August to affect your looks materially.'"

"But all would be now well again," she replied, "was it not for this sad disunion in my dear guardian's family. You, Mr. Bouverie, have witnessed how this amiable, benevolent, feeling-hearted man, pitying my orphan state, used to treat me. Was it

not as a tender parent fondling and caressing a darling child? and could I avoid being inspired by the respondent feeling to love him with all the grateful affection of a child? I did so; I do so. I should feel shame only if it had been otherwise, not in avowing my heart was susceptible of gratitude; and if you and my dear uncle feel conviction that Mrs. Falkland's jealousy was unfounded—for that assurance my heart covets ere it can be happy—and could Mrs. Falkland be completely restored to her mild, discriminating self again, that my poor guardian might be no longer banished from the wife, the children he adores, I should shed not another tear for the inventive malice of Mrs. Crow."

"My Adelaide, you cannot doubt," said Lord De Moreland, affectionately pressing her hand, "but I must feel conviction of all being the fabrication of Lady Leyburn's diabolical avarice to bereave you of protection, to get you into her power, to gain possession of the wealth which my supposed death, she believed, had enriched you by?"

"That conviction even the letter of

Mrs. Crow herself must impress on every mind, could we require other testimony of your innocence, dear Adelaide, than our own knowledge of you," said Montagu, with enthusiasm. "Well, indeed, do I remember the amiable Falkland's paternal conduct to you; and when you in all your griefs, your joys, used to fly to him, and hide your tear-bedewed or blushing cheek upon his bosom, as the bosom of shelter or participation, how have I envied Falkland the happiness of giving you comfort or protection, until sent from the room to conceal my invincible risibility at the ludicrous jealousy of Miss Alicia, who even then failed not to insinuate, even child as you were, that a mutual passion was growing between guardian and ward."

"But what seems, by your account of this strangely perverted Mrs. Falkland, my love," said Lord De Moreland, "to operate most powerfully upon her conviction of her husband's inconstancy, was his having been averse to your marriage with Theodore, and not espousing the cause of a man whose pretensions she favoured."

"Yes, my lord," said Adelaide, blush-

ing; "for she placed no faith in his assertions, that he merely wished me not to form any alliance until my uncle returned to sanction it."

"Poor Falkland!" said his lordship: "I informed him such was my wish, and so he suffered in his domestic peace for his honourable adherence to a promise to me."—Then, after a pause of regretting sympathy, his lordship added, "May we not know whom Mrs. Falkland has selected for you?"

"Certainly, my uncle; but I must premise, that if his lordship has any intentions relative to me, he has not revealed them to me. It is Lord Aberavon, my lord."

"Lord Aberavon!" exclaimed Montagu: "why that was the remarkably handsome coxcomb who flirted so with Ambrosia, four years ago!"

"Oh! but he is no longer a coxcomb; and so improved in good sense and *agrement* of manners, you could scarcely know him again," said Adelaide: "and you may conceive how much he is improved, when those prejudices which Ambrosia raised in my mind against him he has

quite removed; and I now consider him very prepossessing, and I really believe a most amiable young man."

The perfect tranquillity of Adelaide's ingenuous manner, as she spoke of Lord Aberavon, assured her auditors that her heart was yet free from any decided preference in his favour; yet both believed a man who could remove prejudices from such a mind as hers was a being likely to effect more; and they both mused in silence upon the probabilities and possibilities of future events, until a time-piece chimed in the room.

"In one quarter of an hour Mr. Coke will be here, and as well might I think of performing the labours of Hercules in that time," exclaimed his lordship, "as arranging these papers, which seem almost purposely disarranged into the most complete confusion that impeding destiny could execute."

"The poor lawyer will assuredly conceive that chaos is come again," said Bouverie. "But cannot I assist you in making this confusion less formidable, by alphabetical arrangements?"

"My dear Montagu, if you have patience for such an achievement, I have not, I acknowledge; and am just meditating to agree with Coke to take these complications of evils into his hands to manage, as a part of my embarrassments."

"Well," returned Montagu, smiling, "if the lawyer shrinks from the undertaking, leave them to Adelaide and me, to examine each paper just so far as to ascertain their alphabetical station. It will be the most appropriate employment in the world for an invalid like me. Adelaide has the inherent patience of a perfect being; and with her for the companion of my toil, can my perseverance prove so ungallant to fail?"

"I'll take you at your word, then," said Lord De Moreland, smiling in pleased approbation of an arrangement so well calculated to prove auspicious to his favourite project. "You shall toil each day when and for what time you feel inclined, though I much fear it will prove like the toil of the Danaides."

"And now," said Bouverie, "as your lordship must require a confidential con-

ference with your solicitor, my lovely companion in my meditated Danaidean labour, and her pupil in patience, had better retire; and will you, Adelaide, oblige me by taking a walk with an old friend you have not ambulated with for four long years? and will you, my lord, permit this dear friend to walk *tête-à-tête* with me? since I do most earnestly want to talk to her about days of yore, and have had not one moment's opportunity to say one word to her scarcely since we met."

Lord De Moreland smiled, and Adelaide blushed, as they both thought how frail was Montagu's memory, since he had scarcely for one moment ceased talking to her almost exclusively the preceding evening; and now, as her uncle assented to her walking out with Montague, Adelaide went off to equip herself for her expedition, and Dennis O'Rourke returned with the back of Mrs. Crow's letter, which contained all his lordship wanted—the signature and superscription.

CHAPTER XIV.

Although Montagu Bouverie expressed anxiety for an opportunity to converse with Adelaide upon past times, yet the moment he was afforded that power he seemed to cease wishing for it, since he scarcely spoke at all, and only of surrounding objects, and as if necessity rather than choice had awakened his utterance, until Adelaide's delicacy became distressed by an embarrassing silence, which seemed to imply her presence was unwished for; when, determined he should speak to her as she expected an old friend to do, or she would find some excuse for terminating her walk, she ventured to ask him some question relative to Malta.

"Oh, Adelaide!" he exclaimed, whilst his whole frame vibrated with agitation, "name not Malta to me, if you regard me!"

"Never, most certainly, if you dislike to hear of it," said Adelaide, in surprise:

"but I thought—I understood, from my guardian and Mr. Mellifont, you were quite happy there—that it was to you an earthly paradise."

"Oh! fool that I was! I thought it so," he answered with a groan-clad sigh: "but man, dear Adelaide, is too often a victim to delusion, to self-sought, self-wooed delusion. I believed, I fancied Malta an earthly heaven to me; but I foresaw not it was to prove the tomb of my ——" he paused, he hesitated, and falteringly added, "of my health."

Adelaide, with a countenance blanched to the lily's pale hue, in terror, ceased her pedestrian motion, and in tones which tremulously told the agitation of anxiety, said—

"Oh, Mr. Bouverie! the tomb of your health! Surely, surely, you mean not that? My guardian is absent, and no physician called to—to—"

"Oh, Adelaide!" he gratefully and enthusiastically exclaimed, catching her trembling hand, and pressing it with energy to his lips, his heart, "this sweet, affecting sympathy for my ills ought, without

the aid of medical practitioner, to effect my cure."

At this moment Theodore and Lady Ambrosia burst upon their path from an intersecting walk: her ladyship, who from having been looking another way had not perceived the enraptured flight of Montagu's gratitude, approached them with joy and thankfulness for destroying an insipid *tête-à-tête*, in which she found no trace of the tender lover in the silent, pensive husband; not so Theodore, for he had seen Montagu and his lovely companion from afar, had beheld his brother's seizure of Adelaide's hand, and with cheeks glowing and bosom fluttering at he knew not what he met them, glad too at an interruption to a *tête-à-tête* walk, in which he had been chiefly occupied by the suggestions of fear, that he had hastily and unadvisedly bartered his happiness for the temporary gratification of his infatuated vanity.

"How you two walk, as if you shrunk from the indecorum of social contact!" exclaimed Lady Ambrosia, laughing, and flying to her cousin, put one hand through her arm, the other through Montagu's,

"There!" she continued, "I serve as the link to bind you in a chain of amity; and come, Adelaide, extend this chain, by taking Theodore's arm—I give you leave; and although you will then literally separate man and wife, believe me, I shall not fear you."

Adelaide felt hurt, and the two brothers displeased at the indelicacy of this allusion; and Theodore, in his displeasure, mentally articulated—

"Vain babbler! defy not her power; but beware of it."

But what a revolution did the heart of Theodore experience! how was every dying spark of admiration and glowing passion re-kindled in his panting bosom, by the fallacious appearance presented to him of his wife's being all that was amiable, generous, affectionate, and kind, when, after walking on the terrace some few turns, Lady Ambrosia, always capricious in her walks, led them into the park, "to see the world," as she said, where they soon beheld the gallant Colonel Westenra galloping towards them, leading, by a bridle gaily decorated with Chinese roses

and blue ribbons, the horse which Theodore had wished for.

"What can Colonel Westenra mean by all this?" exclaimed Theodore, in a tone of chagrin; "I told him I could not be the purchaser of that beautiful animal."

And now the colonel having advanced near enough for the purpose, sprang off his horse, and gracefully putting the bridle of the one he led into Lady Ambrosia's hand, said—

"I am most happy, Madam, that no other call of arbitrary duty intervened to prevent my having the honour of instantly obeying your ladyship's commands in bringing your purchase to you. This honoured animal now is yours."

"Nay, colonel," exclaimed her ladyship, absolutely blushing, "you quite shock me by this condescension. I only requested you to send him to me."

"I knew of no substitute whom I would honour with so pleasing a duty," replied the colonel, bowing.

Lady Ambrosia gracefully courtesied her thanks, and then turning to her husband, and offering the bridle to his hand,

winningly said, as instructed by Adelaide too in almost the very words she should make her offering in—

"Theodore, have the goodness to accept from me the first gift I have had the power of offering you. I had no wants, no wishes unsupplied but this, when I obtained your generous boon this morning. May he ever safely carry you, but never, never, far away from home and me."

Theodore, instead of taking the offered bridle, snatched his wife into his arms, to press her in glowing gratitude to his astonished heart, when the high mettled steed, happy to feel his liberty, was scampering off to enjoy it in that tempting domain; when the gallant colonel found new employment in the beautiful Lady Ambrosia's service by pursuing the fugitive; while Montague, observing how delighted Adelaide gazed upon her cousin and Theodore through a scene so promising of happy consequences, caught her hand with approbation's fervent pressure, and softly articulated in her ear—

"'This was your inspiration, Adelaide. She has no soul attuned to things like this!

She understands not the sweet, affecting incense of affection's tenderness as you do, Adelaide."

The blushing Adelaide was too much agitated by the fascinating praise of Montagu to possess power for aiming even to deny what he attributed to her; and ere she could achieve the attempt to banter away his suspicions, the colonel had returned with the runaway; and Theodore commenced civil speeches and apologies for the additional trouble his uncontrollable impulse of gratitude to the fair donor of his highly prized gift had created for him.

All necessary *politesse* having passed between Colonel Westenra and Theodore, and Lady Ambrosia having invited the former to remain and pass the day at Roscoville, where he might flirt with her sisters, or her cousin, or play billiards with the men; and the colonel having gladly accepted her invitation, lured by her tempting promise of amusement; he went off with Theodore to the stables, when her ladyship proposed a new and more extended walk.

"Oh, no, Ambrosia!" exclaimed Adelaide, apprehensively, "you forget our poor

friend here is not sufficiently in health to undertake so much."

"I did forget; but you have such a memory, Adelaide, you never forget any thing."

"Never," said Montague, with emphasis; never any thing that kindness wishes to remember."

"Why, major!" exclaimed her ladyship, playfully patting his cheek, "what a pity you have sworn to die a musty bachelor; for you seem to consider my blushing cousin in so transcendent a light, that I really believe she might, if she set about it, absolutely thaw the frost-work round your heart."

"Frost-work round my heart!" repeated Montagu, in a tone so indicative of anguish that it awakened the most trembling apprehension in the bosom of Adelaide that Montagu was unhappy, and unhappy through inauspicious love.

"But," continued Bouverie, endeavouring to speak cheerfully, "Adelaide, who succeeds in all her undertakings, might possibly achieve this arduous exploit would she condescend to try, was it not for the

impediment you mention, Ambrosia—my having attached myself to the order of single blessedness at Malta."

"Humanity forbids every attempt upon the hearts of Maltese knights," said Adelaide, striving to conceal her emotion by her promptitude to speak, "whose cross is their invulnerable shield, an insignia of their order which they ought never to omit wearing, both as their own talisman, and to warn us from an interdicted pursuit that might prove dangerous to the unwary."

"Oh!" returned Montagu, as he gallantly took the hand of Adelaide with a gentle pressure, "did a supposition arise that danger could threaten you from our fraternity, then instantaneous would prove the annihilation of our order—vows would be set at nought, and every knight of St. John of Jerusalem sighing at your feet, in the emulous hope of proving the enviable mortal beloved by Adelaide."

"Well!" exclaimed Lady Ambrosia, laughing, "I must confess the Maltese ladies have improved you, whether knight or apostate, most surprisingly; for I vow

I never heard you say any thing half so civil to any woman, notwithstanding all the pains my sisters have taken to draw fine speeches from you. But there—see! Did ever mortal behold such brilliant rouge as you suffused the cheeks of Adelaide with? Was it a Maltese gift to her? But talking of gifts, did you bring us any thing from abroad?"

"I did."

"Then why have you not given them to us?"

"Because I have had no time, since my dear Lord De Moreland's restoration to us, to think of trifles; before that I was too ill, Ambrosia.

"But now I have jogged your memory, Montagu, let us go in and get them. But remember, I must have my choice of all."

"Excuse me," returned Bouverie, gravely, "if I cannot agree to that arrangement, since Adelaide must have her choice of the trifles she has the goodness to accept from me. You shall certainly choose next."

"But you forget my near affinity now, and that, therefore, I have indisputably the first claim," said her ladyship, eagerly.

"Adelaide is the sister of my heart, and what claim, Ambrosia, can supersede hers?"

"Oh! Sir, I know Miss Bouverie was the sister your heart elected, though your brother's did not," replied her ladyship, haughtily. "As to your gifts, I do not want any of them. I sha'n't accept one of them, *Sir*."

"Oh, Ambrosia!" exclaimed Adelaide, looking expressively, yet kindly, at her, "surely you cannot refuse the proofs a friend brings you of his remembering you whilst far, far distant from you?"

"You, you, Adelaide, who are the sister of his heart, may feel gratified in accepting from him your fancy's choice."

"I shall choose nothing, believe me, Ambrosia," returned Adelaide, modestly and mildly; "but whatever Mr. Bouverie is so good to give me, my fancy shall stamp as the most beautiful of all his gifts of amity."

The rays of approving admiration which emanated from the eloquent eyes of Bouverie again suffused the cheeks of Adelaide with the brightest rouge of beauty's

stores, and Montagu, beaming a smile in further attestation of what his eyes expressed, turned to her angry ladyship, and said—

"You will not, I trust, refuse to accept some of the mementos I brought you, although I cannot yield the point of Adelaide's being supplied before you, either by her own selection or mine; nor conceive I regard the lovely choice of my brother little, because the place which this dear Adelaide holds in my affection refuses you precedence there."

Lady Ambrosia, finding she could not gain her point, gave her hand to Bouverie, in token of reconciliation; and again proposing to return to the house to gain possession of the Maltese treasures, they proceeded home; when her ladyship led the way to her dressing-room, as the place of most perfect security from the intrusion of her sisters; and after a short absence, Montague returned with a box containing various trinkets, which he laid before her ladyship to choose from.

"Not until Adelaide has taken her share," said Lady Ambrosia, who, eagerly

looking into the box, declared in an ecstasy, "no one could go astray, if they were even to make their choice hoodwinked."

Bouverie, struggling with a sigh, said they were the selection of a lady celebrated for her taste; and the observant Adelaide, now more than ever convinced her suspicions were just, turned from the box, no longer feeling a wish to become possessed of any thing it contained.

"But pray, Ambrosia, make your choice, for Adelaide's trifles are here," continued Montagu, taking a smaller box from his bosom, and presenting it to our agitated heroine. "I plainly saw you would make no choice; I therefore selected for you myself; and in the height of vanity presumed to present you with what was the purchase of my own fancy for you, believing that I knew your taste better than any stranger could; and that, if I erred not in my memory's guidance, I could require no other clew to elegance and simplicity."

The blushing Adelaide gracefully received her present, although agitated almost to tears; and upon opening her box, she tremulously said—

"Your taking the trouble of selecting for me, Mr. Bouverie, enhances to me the value of these most beautiful gifts; but hold!—have you not been too bountiful to me? have I not more than I ought?"

"Nothing, nothing, dear Adelaide," he exclaimed, closing the box, "but a chain, and a few things for Mrs. Falkland, which we will talk of some other time. Now you will have the goodness to assist me in selecting for Lady Leyburn and her unmarried daughters. The remainder I intend for the poor Birch's."

Adelaide now smiled so celestially sweet, in approbation of his remembrance of these unfortunate young women, that Montagu, as he gazed in silent admiration on her, felt something so sacred in the sensations she inspired, that with a sigh, which now seemed painfully to break from his heart, he mentally articulated—"She is surely not formed for the world she lives in!"

"You surpass me in quantity, certainly, Adelaide," said Lady Ambrosia, after lulling her alarm of superiority by examining her cousin's present; "but I quite eclipse

you in the beauty of mine. Yours are so plain and simple, I envy you them not."

"How completely then has Mr. Bouverie suited all our tastes!" said Adelaide, with genuine sincerity; "for I would not exchange the most trifling thing amongst my treasures for all that box contained, ere you lessened its value."

Lady Ambrosia and Adelaide having at length made the different selections for Lady Leyburn and her unmarried daughters, Bouverie proceeded to present them; appointing our heroine to meet him in a few moments in Lord De Moreland's library, where, he said, he was certain they had been wanting some time.

"What for?" exclaimed Lady Ambrosia, inquisitively, the moment Montagu departed.

"To assist my uncle in arranging some papers."

"Nonsense! It is to *arrange* your marriage settlements with Montagu."

"Ambrosia," said Adelaide, gravely, "I have many things to transact with my uncle beside the arrangement of my mar-

riage settlements with any man: one of which this very morning has happily enabled me to give myself the pleasure of making you a little wedding offering. This draft, I trust, will allow you to purchase a necklace like that you so much admire of mine."

Lady Ambrosia, with a heart smitten by self-reproach for her late petulance and selfishness towards her generous cousin, now threw herself upon Adelaide's bosom, thanked her for her goodness, and implored her pardon for all her transgressions towards her.

"But am I really," at length her ladyship exclaimed, "to have all this large sum of money myself to spend? Do you absolutely mean, my dear, kind, forgiving, generous friend, that I am actually to lay out all this on a necklace?"

"I mean you to do exactly what your reason and your fancy lead you to, Ambrosia, which will excuse, I hope, the more delicate method of laying it out myself on some ornament for you. But I must now say adieu, as Mr. Bouverie thinks my uncle has been some time expecting me."

Adelaide proceeded to her uncle's library,

with all the rapidity of determined resolution not to give thought indulgence; for she found her heart panted to recapitulate in private rumination all that Montagu had said and looked expressive of more than common interest for her; but not while the fascination of each look and tone still floated on her vision and vibrated on her ear would reason permit that dangerous retrospection, since fear, instructed by observation, had whispered, "that Montagu was attached abroad."

Mr. Coke was gone; and Adelaide instantly produced the presents of Bouverie, and, with glowing gratitude, announced to whom she was indebted for such treasures.

"Chains! and crosses! Adelaide," exclaimed his lordship, smiling; "what an alarmingly ominous present would that be was Montagu your suitor!"

"Not alarmingly,"—said Adelaide, endeavouring to veil, by apparent playful ease, the agitation this mere allusion to Montagu being her wooer had excited in her bosom,—"not alarmingly, since here are too, you see, my lord, counter omens, amulets in abundance, and," raising a large

bottle of otto of rose, "a powerful quantity of solid sweet."

Lord De Moreland now looking up, to smile his affection upon a being whom he found each passing moment awakening increasing interest in his heart, beheld Montagu Bouverie standing behind her, with eyes irradiated by admiration, gazing on the unconscious Adelaide.

"Bouverie art thou?" exclaimed his lordship, "or some noiseless phantom, borne on air to fright us?"

Montagu now took the hand of the blushing, startled Adelaide, and, with a gentle pressure, put a little parcel into it.

"Accept, dear Adelaide!" he said, "the remainder of my little collection of ornaments for you; something to class with amulets and sweets. Cameos bearing devices of many beautiful anecdotes of love and friendship, which I dare not produce in my first offering, Ambrosia appeared in so rapacious a mood."

Adelaide was so much distressed at finding Montagu had heard what had passed between her uncle and her in allusive *badinage*, that she scarcely possessed power

to thank him for this beautiful addition to his flattering proofs of having remembered her in foreign climes with her usual animated grace; which Lord De Moreland promptly observing, called Montagu's attention from her to hear some of the opinions of Mr. Coke upon the affairs his lordship had to arrange with Lady Leyburn and his grandfather's numerous creditors.

"Between whom and my machiavelian sister," continued his lordship, "Coke has not the smallest doubt there exists a compact, formed for mutual interest, and therefore strongly recommends my positive refusal to pay the demands of these suspected creditors, and then to follow the guidance of discrimination in my obedience to equity, and to pay, or not to pay, where judgment, generosity, and justice, opens or closes my hand; and from all he has suggested, I have summoned up sufficient firmness to cut the matter short, by despatching Coke to town to bring down hither, without delay, some London lawyers of the first eminence; into whose hands I shall resign the whole proceedings, and will then march into Kent, leaving Coke and his able bre-

thren to clear the abbey of these devouring locusts of avarice and dishonour.

"In the intermediate time I shall remain quietly here, disguised in my usual aspect of characteristic indolence, but with full employment too; for though Coke pronounces the greater part of the papers collected in the presses here are useless lumber, purposely accumulated to perplex me, yet he has pointed out some places where to collect in alphabetical order may be of the most important service, therefore gladly I accept your kindly offered aid.

"We must work hard, my children, I now find, for our future bread; and must defer all our projects of pastime and pleasure until we remove to De Moreland Castle, or gain quiet possession of this overgrown abbey, where dissipation and villany have reigned too long."

Cheerfully and patiently Lord De Moreland and his two faithful auxiliaries commenced the task assigned them, too puzzling and important to admit of the pleasing recreation of much converse during this compulsive toil; but Bouverie, though arduously employed himself, promptly disco-

vered that Adelaide was more expert in the business than either his lordship or himself.

"And at all events," he added, smiling, "you perform it with graceful ease, as if it was a pastime."

By the time the first dinner bell summoned this industrious trio to the toilet, it was very obvious that Bouverie's remark upon Adelaide's expedition was just, by the much greater quantity she had compiled; for she had resolutely attended to her employment, determined to combat against every thought which might lead her to contemplation she feared was teeming with peril to her future peace; whilst Montagu, often pausing with resistless impulse to gaze on Adelaide, or to ponder on past scenes and future prospects of happiness or misery; and Lord De Moreland, attracted by his anxious observation of both his companions from his diligence, made no rapid way in the arrangement Mr. Coke had recommended.

CHAPTER XV.

When Ladies Seraphina and Celestina entered the drawing-room linked in the loop of amity, as usual, previous to dinner, the latter languishingly exclaimed—

"You perceive, Bouverie, how you have enchained me."

"Nay," exclaimed Lady Ambrosia, laughing, "if fellow suffering can ease your burden, you must find prompt relief; since the man has had the cruelty to bind every female of the party in his chains, as well as you."

"I accuse him not of cruelty, since mine I voluntarily wear," said the beautiful Celestina.

Colonel Westenra now advancing to the *chaise-longue*, where Lady Ambrosia was seated between Adelaide and Montagu, began humorously to upbraid her ladyship "for deceiving his credulity, by holding out the delusive lure of her lovely cousin's flirting with him for part of his morning's happiness; and lo! he had not once set

eyes on the attractive ignis-fatuus, from the moment he had lost sight of her, in the park, until she then appeared in the drawing-room."

Oh!" replied Lady Ambrosia, gaily, "surely you must know how very fallacious a promise must be that is made for a lady (and one that is young too and beautiful) to perform: and this cousin of mine, gentle as she looks, is, I assure you, as difficult to be caught as a timid hind: but hunger, which subdues the wildest animals even of the species and country to which you belong, colonel, has placed her at present in our toils; so mind that you permit her not to escape, but secure her between you and Montagu at dinner—Montagu, whom I appoint to make her perform my covenant of flirting with you for the remainder of the day."

Dinner was now announced; and Lady Ambrosia, though she placed Colonel Westenra next to Adelaide at table, took care to seat herself at his other side, and accommodatingly performed herself the flirting task she had assigned her cousin.

Lord De Moreland was so refined a cour-

tier, had such command over not only his deportment but even over the expression of his countenance, that Lady Leyburn was deceived by the appearance of his unruffled serenity, nor once auguring an impending storm, was all herself again; believing all her projects were in fair train for happy completion, she ceased to act from the inspirations of trembling apprehensions, as on the preceding day; now all her natural propensities escaped at intervals from beneath the veil she carelessly threw over them, and those plans she had feared her brother might fathom or feel disgust at she now resumed, since he, poor, easy man! was still, she believed, her dupe, the inert son of indolence.

Her flattering adulations to Theodore and her daughter Ambrosia again broke forth, and her concealment of her dislike to Adelaide and Montagu was not always successful; and now in lively strains she talked of new revels, proclaimed her purpose of summoning cheerful guests once more, and announced her immediate intention of giving a splendid ball as joy's delighted tribute for her dear, dear beloved

Edwin's escape from massacre, and happy restoration to his adoring sister; and as Colonel Westenra possessed all that good nature and invincible good humour so natural to many Hibernian gentleman, and totally devoid of any particle of self-sufficiency, aiming at pretensions to nothing but unaffected pleasantry, he had credit for infinitely less intellect, information, or observation than he was gifted with; so that Lady Leyburn, transforming him into a non-entity at once, made no ceremony of uttering all her thoughts before him.

It was immediately after the final departure of the attendants, when conversation began in extended influence to supersede the employment of serious attention to the good cheer of elegance and hospitality, that something being said of female letter-writers, Colonel Westenra exclaimed—

"But you need not be seeking so far for the most elegant female writer of the age, for she is sitting at the table with you. I'll engage I have a proof in my pocket that will get a verdict in favour of my assertion, even from the court of Apollo. There, Lord De Moreland, I wish your

lordship would be just looking at this note, and receive conviction of Lady Ambrosia Bouverie being the most elegant letter-writer of the age."

"A bull! a bull!" exclaimed the flippant Mr. D. Blackthorn, "a bull! colonel, just run wild from the county of Clare. A note is not a letter, Sir."

"And it may end its career in the county of Kil-dare, if you choose, Sir," replied the colonel, quietly: "but for my own part, I did not perceive this bull race until the attempt was made to bait it, nor then very clearly, I must confess, and being after dinner may plead my excuse: but still I am mighty apt to believe notes and letters belong to the same class, and we must all allow that letters form notes, and most agreeable ones too, when they come from the Bank to us."

This little play upon words, in proof of the colonel's good humour, terminated the direful panic the commencement of his speech had awakened in the mind of Mr. Daniel Blackthorn, who had no objection to any daring but that of daring to be killed.

Lord De Moreland had now finished the

note, and, in pleased surprise, paid a very flattering eulogium to his niece upon the unaffected elegance of her style of writing.

The delighted Theodore could not restrain his ebullitions of praise, by recounting, with enthusiastic rapture, how Ambrosia had so handsomely, affectionately, and generously appropriated a sum he had given her for her own individual use to gratify a wish of his.

"Nor," cried Lady Ambrosia, bearing up most undauntedly in this overwhelming tide of unqualified eulogy, "must the colonel go without his meed of merited encomium; since he, my dear uncle, most gallantly brought the beautiful animal himself, leading him by a ribbon bridle, and decked with lovely roses."

"And which cost the colonel all the profit he had upon the horse, which he was a d—ish flat to sell for such a mongrel price," exclaimed Lord Leyburn.

"The roses for this horse, my lord," replied the colonel, "cost me only a full glow of heartfelt pleasure in the honour of decorating him for a lady: and as to the price, I purchased him a colt, had the

pleasure of breaking him; that pastime over, I wanted another to train; and looking to amusement for my profit, I only thought of remunerating the expence I had been at, not having the honour of being a horse-dealer or a jockey."

Ladies Seraphina and Celestina, enraged with Lady Ambrosia for counteracting their manœuvres for placing Montagu between themselves at dinner, and leading him to an uninterrupted opportunity of paying his ready attention to the alarming Adelaide, sat boiling with ire, and planning mentally how to retaliate mortification upon their sister; and in this kind pursuit they both at once requested to see "this famous note, so puffed by Colonel Westenra's *politesse*."

"Really a very good note, and so perfectly correct," exclaimed Lady Seraphina, the moment she had perused it, "that you must forgive my amazement at hearing you wrote it, Ambrosia; since when you ran off from your mother you knew nothing of grammar, even by name, and as to spelling! mercy on us! you used to begin journey with a g, and so on."

"Well," replied Lady Ambrosia, blushing with apprehension and anger, yet resolute to preserve the equilibrium of her temper, to afford her all the advantage of quickness in repartee, in which she flattered herself she excelled, "well then, my sweet Seraphina, and if I began my journey to Seaview with a g, it was in presentiment of its proving a *good* one to me, for there I learned to spell, and to understand what g really commenced: for example, good-nature, gentleness, generosity, and——"

"And gallipot!" exclaimed Lord Leyburn, forgetting that whilst he indulged in what he considered an excellent jest, he should most probably offend Adelaide.

"Yes," returned Lady Ambrosia, "and goose and gabbler; and was I quite sure you understood the definition of the word, I would add *gentleman* too, Lord Leyburn."

"And pray who taught you all these valuable acquirements, my dear sister?" demanded Lady Celestina, with soft, conciliating accents.

"Adelaide!" exclaimed Lady Ambrosia, with emphasis, aroused by the indignation the ill nature of her sisters inspired into the

most animated glow of heart-warmed gratitude to her cousin.

"Our highly cultivated cousin was certainly most competent to so *arduous* a task," returned Lady Celestina, endeavouring not to betray, by any variation in the silvery tones of her assumed voice, how much she was disconcerted, "having been educated by that celebrated man, that wonderful a-po-the-ca-ry, who chymicalized dogs' legs into fallow acres; and who from his patients acquiring patience, which I presume you found, Ambrosia, he had taught his pupil, whom I remember too he instructed in physic, which was useful here somehow, I forget exactly in what way, when she was here last."

"But I forget it not—I never shall forget it!" exclaimed Lord De Moreland, with a look and in a tone of severity; "for she saved my life by her sneered at remembrance of a prescription she had been instructed in to benefit a fellow being."

Lady Leyburn, stung to the quick at this burst of awakened gratitude to Adelaide, determined at once to lower her in her uncle's estimation, suddenly addressed her, saying:

" Talking of the Falklands reminds me of asking you, Adelaide, *my love*, what is the reason of their mysterious separation?"

Lord De Moreland, perfectly defining the malice of this question, promptly replied for Adelaide—

" From you, Lady Leyburn, Adelaide did not expect this question of apparent ignorance, since we are fully instructed to demand from you an explanation of the mystery. A person of the name of Alice Crow has given us, under her hand, a clew to your ladyship, as the person in the world to gratify Adelaide's curiosity and mine upon this tale of mystery."

" Alice Crow! I scarcely know the woman," faltered out her ladyship, in painful alarm: " and how dare she say I know aught of these people's separation?"

" For your sake, Isabella, I trust she is a mere gasconader relative to your friendship with her," replied Lord De Moreland, " since I fear you will prove her a dangerous confidant; but this subject I shall more fully discuss with you at a more seasonable opportunity."

Lady Leyburn not feeling much at ease,

took an early moment to adjourn with the female members of the party to the drawing-room, where Lord De Moreland did not long allow Adelaide to remain exposed to the ill nature or insidious designs of his sister, without his protecting presence.

Montagu was no *bon vivant*, therefore he too appeared early in the drawing-room, where, notwithstanding the determined assaults of the Ladies Seraphina and Celestina against his heart, he parried their arrows, and defended the citadel with firm resistance, that yielded no hope; and nearly as well did Adelaide oppose the open and covert attacks of Lord Leyburn and Mr. D. Blackthorn.

When Adelaide retired to her pillow this night, she found no effort of hers could banish a retrospection of the day's events, when Montagu's conduct to her past in review, to puzzle and alarm her. He had paid her the most marked attention; he had allowed no opportunity to escape of offering eulogium upon her personal or mental charms; whilst his heart, she felt conviction, was devoted to another, hopelessly, she believed; and the pity awaken-

ed in her bosom by that belief she feared would prove a dangerous companion in a breast she was alarmed to find too susceptibly disposed to tender impressions of Montagu's merits.

"Alas! and was the advice of her guardian to fail in its influence upon her obedient mind? The advice of her dear, dear guardian for the first time in her life to be disregarded by her, and in his absence too? Was she to sacrifice her happiness without one struggle to preserve it? Oh! no, no, she hoped, she trusted she was not so ungratefully unmindful of the warning of her tender, apprehensive guardian, so weak, so silly in herself, as to be allured by the intoxicating incense of adulation into a tender attachment to a man who, however amiable and honourable in intention, had no heart to give her, she was sure." And now she firmly resolved to secure herself on the morrow in the shell of apathy against Montagu's dangerous attentions, his still more dangerous perfections, and only in future to allow her sensibility to operate in pity for his ills.

On the subsequent day, Montagu, al-

though he attended the *dejeune* of Lord De Moreland, appeared not less languid or more cheerful than on the preceding day, yet still to converse with Adelaide seemed his favourite pursuit; and whilst he did so he appeared animated and happy; but the moment any thing intervened to withdraw his attention from her, he sunk at once into the abstraction of an afflicted mind, and only by a renewal of assiduities to Adelaide could he find an antidote to the poison of that malady which subdued his peace, whilst Adelaide construed all as inauspicious to a hope of respondent attachment; and though difficult was the task to separate her feelings, she gave him her pity in its fullest extent for all his mental and personal ills, yet with unfaltering firmness restrained the *tendresse* of her heart from flowing out upon a desert sand.

For this day and the two succeeding ones no change took place in the conduct of Adelaide and Montagu to each other, and Lord De Moreland was their attentive yet puzzled observer; and through these days the abbey was enlivened by gay parties at dinner, and by rapidly increasing

inmates assembling for the approaching ball, for which preparations were in great forwardness, since Lady Leyburn could now only exist in dissipated scenes to lull reflection and alarm, as laudanum is used to hush the pangs of mental and bodily sufferings: but the late hours of revel were not those of Lord De Moreland and his adopted children; they arose early, and retired in respondent time.

The sixth day after Adelaide's arrival at Roscoville was the sabbath day, and soon after she had breakfasted with her uncle and Bouverie she said, with an accompanying blush—

"I must now take leave of my friends here; for this being a dry day, I can walk to church, and I shall have the protection of Obearn and Dennis, my lord."

"But you have no objection to going to church in a carriage, or to other company, I hope, my love," replied his lordship, smiling; "for in that case poor Montagu and myself would feel sadly disappointed. It is a long, a very long time, my Adelaide, since I was at church, and you cannot wonder at my feeling anxious to go

there now, in heart-inspired gratitude for my late escape from massacre and bondage, or of my wish of offering my duty's inspiration accompanied by my children, whom I doubt not will unite in thanksgiving for my restoration to them.

Montagu and Adelaide, inspired by the same impulse, caught each a hand of his lordship, and though with tremulous emotion, yet with heart directed energy, pressed it to their lips in silence, as the tear of sacred gratitude which trembled in their eyes betrayed how sensibly they felt the blessing of his restoration.

Lady Ambrosia, in her determined assumption of an amiable character, that Adelaide should not in any thing surpass her, had totally forgotten piety as an essential feature in it; and as it was not the custom to think of Heaven at Roscoville, the idea of going to church had never once entered her head until she discovered Adelaide was gone there; when, angry with her cousin for doing what she felt must inevitably make her appear more estimable through that day than she could now pretend to do, she flew to her husband with

her complaint of how Adelaide had served her by going to church without her; and so like the concern of disappointed devotion her chagrin appeared, that Theodore felt new raptures at the judicious choice which the last few days assured him he had made of a wife.

The moment Adelaide returned from church, Lady Ambrosia hastened to upbraid her for not allowing her to be a companion in her devotion; when Adelaide, believing these murmurs the inspirations of an awakening piety, proposed her going to evening service; a proposition that was rapturously acceded to by her ladyship, particularly as it would not interfere with her dinner toilet.

"You shall go with us and take care of us, my Theodore!" she exclaimed; "yet how shall we get to church? We must not dare ask for a carriage to take us, or we should get famously quizzed for methodists going to evening service. Can we walk it, I wonder? Who can tell how far it is?"

"A mile and a half across the fields," replied Adelaide, amazed at her cousin's

not knowing the distance of the church from the place she had lived in almost her whole life.

"You will allow me to accompany you too, I hope?" said Montagu, beseechingly.

"Not, certainly, on a walking party, Major Bouverie," replied Adelaide, with quickness. "You have been to church once already to-day, and walking there now would be infinitely too much for you to attempt." And now, deeply blushing at her own betraying anxiety, she added, "You see Lady Celestina was very correct. I have acquired a smattering of the profession of physic, since I know what is good for invalids to do, and what to abstain from."

"But, Adelaide, were you to lean on my arm in our walk, I know I could accomplish it with ease, and without fatigue," said Montagu, gazing at her in unequivocal admiration.

"A singular method this for lessening fatigue," replied the blushing Adelaide, affecting a tone of raillery to conceal her emotion, "to invite a burden to rest upon one!"

"Ah! Adelaide, but it is a magic burden, that would beguile the way, and charm me to insensibility of every toil or ill."

Going to church was a new thing to Lady Ambrosia, as she had not been in one since she left Kent; she was therefore highly charmed with it as a novelty, as well as from the idea of its proving an equipoise in her scale of that day against Adelaide's merits; and full of praises of the beautiful church, the venerable pastor, the excellence of his sermon, and the delights of the walk, she continued holding forth to her companions on her way home, until coming to a sequestered stile, hid from their view by a romantic delving copse, they beheld Montagu seated there, impatiently awaiting their return.

"Oh, brother!" exclaimed Theodore, "how could you be so imprudent to seat yourself here, exposed to all the dangers of inaction?"

"Why, man, I have my great coat on, you see; and having got the blue devils by myself, I sallied out to meet you, as a sovereign remedy against *ennui*."

"Adelaide," said Montagu, the moment

she had got over the stile, "will you not take my arm?"

"No," she returned, in blushing timidity; "I would not for worlds increase the fatigue of your wal ."

"Oh!" he replied, "I will readily hazard the peril of being quite annihilated by this light zephyr form resting on my arm, which was but ill selected to do honour to your sword in battle, if it could not sustain more than this, my lovely friend:" and now, with gentle determination, he drew her half reluctant hand through his arm.

And now, as they pursued their walk homewards, Montagu talked on incessantly of past scenes at Seaview, with all the animation of his former vivacity; and dwelling on every scene in which they had been mutually engaged with so much persevering pleasure, that Adelaide, by the time they reached the abbey, found her belief of his attachment abroad begin to falter.

Scarcely had Lady Ambrosia entered the house when she received a summons from her mother, to attend her instantly in her boudoir; when Adelaide, leaving the brothers to each other's society, proceeded to

her dressing-room, there in retrospection to review Montagu's conduct to her through that day, and to question her heart most closely if it was attending to the cautions and precepts given to her by her beloved guardian?

CHAPTER XVI.

"OH! my infatuated, unfortunate, lovely child!" exclaimed Lady Leyburn, the moment she beheld her daughter; and throwing her arms around the alarmed young woman's neck, pretended to weep. "Oh! surely, surely it was your envious destiny, my Ambrosia, that led you, in all the blaze of your unrivalled charms, to throw yourself away on that amiable but untitled pauper, your *poor* husband.

"Oh! my child! my child! had you but paused to ascertain the intentions of Lord Aberavon, now, instead of being devoted in the flower of your youth, the rare blossoms of your unparaleled beauty, to skulk into the dreary shade of retirement, to prevent starving or ruin, upon the paltry pittance of a few hundreds per annum, you might be now, at this moment, coming forth in all the splendid, enviable *eclat* of a duchess."

Lady Ambrosia uttering something like a shriek of dismay, in trembling anticipation

of an expected evil, implored her mother to explain.

Lady Leyburn delayed not to realize these anticipating pangs by presenting her a page in a magazine to read, stating that "Viscount Aberavon was now most indisputably and unexpectedly come into the dukedom of St. Kilda, by the late duke his cousin being killed in a fox-chace, and his duchess (to whom he had not been quite a year united), subdued by so dire an event, having, just as the magazine was printing, terminated every expectation of an intervening heir by the premature birth of a still-born chid."

When Lady Ambrosia had perused what she did feel to be mortifying intelligence, she laid the magazine down without a comment, since she felt ashamed to acknowledge to her mother, who evidently expected such confidence, that she experienced pain and repentance at having become the wife of a poor, untitled man, when a ducal coronet had awaited her acceptance; and although her inclinations had aided her wish of triumphing over Adelaide in luring Theodore from her, and

that in a few months she expected to become a mother, yet even that attaching tie to her husband possessed no influence to annihilate her regret, her mortification; and in visible chagrin she for some time sat in repining rumination, until remembrance suddenly presented her with an alleviation, when she broke her anguished silence, and exclaimed—

"But, mamma, it does not so very materially signify my injudicious marriage, as you can procure an earldom for Theodore, you know."

"I have before told you, my silly, infatuated child, that my power of doing so is barely possible, and not until death removes a barrier. I cannot kill a man to make you a countess, child; nor do you deserve much exertion on my part to make you any thing but a pauper's wife. You, who had the ball at your foot, with your youth, your birth, your heavenly beauty, to sacrifice yourself in such a groveling way!—Blackthorn has no patience with you; and has been so far led by his anxiety for your welfare as to hazard my displeasure by hinting his wish, that even

by what has brought about many happy matches—a divorce—we might get this ducal coronet, and clear seventy thousand per annum into the family."

The idea of a divorce suggested by her mother so shocked the naturally pure heart of Lady Ambrosia, that it required all the artful soothings of this monster of iniquity, Lady Leyburn, to lull her indignation and her horror; and at length a superb pearl tiara was the peace-offering of this diabolical parent, who remembering Lord Aberavon as a very young man, when he appeared thoughtless and docile, now panted to entangle him, even by the sacrifice of her child to infamy, into her toils, to prey upon his now ample stores; while her daughter, with a mind so perverted by the frivolity of her education, and by pernicious counsel and example, was soon led by her insidious flattery, and by a beautiful ornament for her own loveliness, to hush the storm which offended purity had raised, and to obliterate the remembrance of her mother's culpability.

Amity thus restored, Lady Leyburn subtilely dropping the open suggestion of

a divorce, commenced her snares for such a direful event, by leading her daughter to believe there could be nothing reprehensible in giving her charms the triumph, through innocent encouragement, of rivetting the chains of the Duke of St. Kilda so firmly, as to attach him to her on a platonic system for life; by doing which much essential benefit must accrue to herself and family from his great interest and ample stores (now the power and possessions of two great and wealthy families centred in him), while, through his grace's keeping the affection thus of Theodore in perpetual alarm, he would be led to the most uxorious obedience to her wishes.

At length, full of horrible ideas, the inspiration of a parent, Lady Ambrosia left the boudoir of her diabolical mother, for the purpose of adorning her now more than ever highly appreciated beauty; and this pleasing task finished to her highest admiration, and full of all the airs and affectations the expected eclat of enchaining the Duke of St. Kilda for life inspired, she repaired to the apartments of her cousin, whose toilet had long beeu

made, and whom she found attentively reading one of Fordyce's sermons.

"Dear me!" exclaimed her ladyship, "only think of the poor good man composing sermons for *young* women! He ought to have dedicated them to the babe unborn, anticipating you, my primitive coz, as the only *young* woman who would ever study them."

"Ambrosia!" exclaimed Adelaide, in pained surprise, "I thought you were in earnest when you expressed yourself charmed with the sermon you heard about two hours since; and did not that recommend early piety? Oh, Ambrosia! in your ingenuous countenance I read that something has occurred to unsettle the propensities of a naturally pure and pious heart since last we parted. Alas! alas! Ambrosia, how I grieve for this!"

The tones and look of Adelaide found their instant way to the heart of Lady Ambrosia; and, subdued by their power, she burst into tears.

"Oh, Adelaide!" she exclaimed, "you are ever to me like a magnet, influenced by some good magii that attracts me on

to goodness—my mother, like one influenced by evil spirits, to lead me to their ways."

And now while the power of Adelaide was in its full glow of operation, she entered ingenuously upon her mother's diabolical conference with her, only suppressing, for her parent's sake, her iniquitous suggestion of a divorce: but even without that horror Adelaide heard sufficient to impel her, with all the force her pious heart and intellectual powers could yield her, to portray the heinousness, the hazard of Lady Leyburn's counsel; and so successfully she represented all things, that when the dinner bell summoned them to the drawing-room every precept of her mother was banished for the present from the bosom of this votary of instability; and for more than half an hour, the affecting tenderness with which Theodore made his inquiries of how she found herself after her long walk almost led to a determination of following the earnest advice just given her by her cousin, to set out immediately after the approaching ball with Theodore to his cottage, as a place of se-

cure refuge from her mother's pernicious counsels.

But how nearly had every predilection in favour of her husband, every precept of Adelaide's piety and morality, been annihilated, had the views, the ardent passion of the new Duke of St. Kilda been directed to her; for as the now rather numerous inmates of Roscoville Abbey were assembled in the drawing-rooms in the evening, striking out varied amusements to kill the *ennui* that sombre Sunday would have else awakened, the Duke of St. Kilda was announced.

An expressive smile beamed over Lady Leyburn's joyfully amazed countenance as she looked significantly towards her daughter, who answered not with a respondent glance; she only blushed, and her bosom fluttered on hearing his arrival so unexpectedly announced: nor was hers the only change of countenance effected by his name, for Adelaide blushed in half formed apprehension of what had brought his grace to Roscoville; Montagu's face flushed to crimson, in conviction of it; and so did Theodore's, in a sort of sickly

alarm, since his wife had been weak enough to boast to him of Lord Aberavon's ardent passion for her, and of his having appeared at Beechbrook expressly for the purpose of offering her his hand: she had been led by the same silly vanity to make a similar boast to her brother and her sisters, who now, in the unamiableness of their dispositions, commenced significant nods and smiles at Lady Ambrosia; and then in whispers informed those seated near them, "that the Duke of St. Kilda was an ardent admirer of Lady Ambrosia's, and as her husband seemed of a jealous temper, they expected much amusement from this unexpected visit."

His grace, in all the proper drapery of wo's decorum, appeared; and immediately paying his respects to Lady Leyburn, apologized for his intrusion at, he feared, an unseasonable hour: but on his route from the north to rejoin his regiment in Kent, he had in London heard of the restoration of Lord De Moreland to his family; and being then so short a distance from Roscoville, he could not resist the pleasure of

coming to offer his sincere congratulations to her ladyship upon so happy an event.

Lady Leyburn most courteously thanked his grace, cordially invited him to remain that night, and as long as inclination prompted his stay at Roscoville; and then, after congratulating him upon his change of title, she requested leave to introduce him to her dear brother, her providentially restored treasure! and an old friend of his, who had got new appellations as well as his grace.

His grace's introduction to Lord De Moreland now took place, and who being seated with Lady Ambrosia and her constellation of favourites, the duke had not far to move for his presentation to her; and as the lovely Adelaide was seated on the *chaise longue* by her cousin, the brightening crimson of his glowing countenance, visible to all, was ascribed by all to Lady Ambrosia's influence, except by Lord De Moreland and Montagu Bouverie, but they attributed the betraying suffusion to the right source; and both read in his countenance at one glance, as he gazed upon

her, that Mrs. Falkland had not spoken hypothetically, when she had affirmed Lord Aberavon's being seriously attached to Adelaide.

Montagu, who was seated near the *chaise longue*, next to Adelaide, almost immediately after the duke joined their group, arose, and moved to a distant part of the room, when instantly his vacated chair was occupied by his grace, who drew it a little behind Adelaide, for the more convenient purpose of talking exclusively to her; when Lady Ambrosia, and those who believed him devoted to her, construed this attention to Miss Bouverie as an admirable manœuvre to avert the eye of suspicion.

For Adelaide he promptly found a theme to converse upon, which awakened the most lively interest of her heart, since he brought her intelligence that despatches had arrived about noon that very day from Falkland; that he himself had spoken to the messenger, who told him Mr. Falkland had had a most uncommonly rapid voyage to ——, and was in perfect health when the frigate left ——, to meet an equally pros-

perous voyage home in its conveyance of letters to Mr. Falkland's friends, with his despatches to government.

The joy of the grateful Adelaide at this intelligence was so excessive, that in the spontaneous impulse of her enthusiastic feeling she would have flown to her uncle and to Montagu, to make them participators in her rapture, only the calumny of the vile Mrs. Crow arose in dire remembrance to restrain her.

Montagu Bouverie from his post of observation beheld the animated joy, amounting to almost enthusiastic rapture, which the lowly accents of the Duke of St. Kilda illumined the eloquent countenance of Adelaide with; and left to conjecture what could have caused such an effect, he ingeniously struck out its being caused by the triumph of female vanity, from which he supposed he should now have conviction the bosom of Adelaide was not exempt; for that the duke had now offered her his new honours he had no doubt, and that she would accept them, to retaliate triumph upon Lady Ambrosia, he feared her not to be concealed joy most

forcibly augured; and these ideas once awakened, he became so restless between his wish to quit the room and his anxiety to remain and make further annotations, that at length his disquietude becoming visible to Lord De Moreland, his lordship arose to join him; when Adelaide, fearing her uncle was going to retire for the night, precipitately flew after him, and in a lowly cautious whisper briefly informed him of the happy intelligence the Duke of St. Kilda had just communicated of her guardian's safety.

This hasty and evidently agitated communication was not lost on Bouverie, who instantly concluding it to be a disclosure of the duke's offer, and not once considering the improbability of the delicately-minded, timid Adelaide being in such indecorous haste to reveal such an event, arose as precipitately as she had done, and as swiftly as some intervening impediments would permit quitted the room; which impediments favouring Lord De Moreland's pursuit, he arrived in the antichamber to this suite almost the same moment that Bouverie had entered it.

"Montagu," his lordship exclaimed, "if you are not too much exhausted by the fatigue of the day to remain up another hour, I should be happy to hold a private conference with you."

Although Bouverie was panting to be alone, to define, if possible, the extraordinary feelings which had just assailed his heart, he could not say a negative to Lord De Moreland's wish for a conference; and they therefore now proceeded to his lordship's library.

CHAPTER XVII.

The moment they were seated, Lord De Moreland said—

"I have been strongly importuned through this whole day by Lady Leyburn to make a proposition to you, which, she affirms, 'I shall find in the form of a command from the late Lord De Moreland, amongst his mass of papers, to bring about an alliance between our presumptive heir and one of my nieces.' I will by no means pretend to vouch for the truth of her ladyship's assertion, my dear Montagu, yet I will not scruple to ask if you have any objection to concur with such a proposition?"

"My lord," replied Bouverie, visibly agitated, "in a matter of such importance you must expect me to be ingenuous; and I answer—to the house of Leyburn I have an insuperable objection."

"But I have a niece who does not belong to the house of Leyburn, Montagu," replied his lordship, smiling expressively.

"You have a niece, my lord, who claims kindred with all that is lovely in form and mind, but—"

"But what? dear Montagu! What means that portentous *but*, which sounds so terrifically in my ears?"

"I was going to add to that certainly ungracious *but*, my lord, she is beloved, ardently, by a young nobleman so every way fascinating, so gifted by rank and fortune as a suitable alliance, that mine would be a most unpardonably presumptuous part to enter the lists with him for the favour of Miss Bouverie."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Lord De Moreland, smiling, "what a vastly pretty, becoming thing humility is in a man so transcendently formed to captivate! Really I wish Miss Bouvérie could see you whilst this *unpresuming* fit is on you, since the fascinating novelty must render you irresistible in her eyes."

"Oh! no, my lord. No form in which I can now appear to Adelaide can make me any thing but a friend in her eyes; for I have this moment received conviction which has annihilated every hope for me.

The Duke of St. Kilda, I have no doubt—although the inprobable promptitude of the measure might awaken many, did I not know that ardent love is not a patient respecter of times and seasons—the Duke of St. Kilda has made his offer to Adelaide; and—and—but you know it all, my lord, for she could not wait until to-morrow to make you a participator in her joy."

"True, my most sagacious friend, she could not let me wait until to-morrow to participate in the joy his grace had conveyed to her grateful bosom, by the intelligence he brought her of the arrival of her guardian in health and safety at ——. This intelligence caused the duke's earnest conference with Adelaide, and illumined her eyes and smiles with the radiance of sublimated joy; so, my dear Montagu, this offer of your fancy is a chimera which shall not fright me from my present purpose of imparting my hopes, fears, and wishes to you.

"My very dear Montagu, it is many a desolate year since my own individual happiness was cruelly blighted in its full

blossom, by death and bigotry; and all that I can now enjoy of it must be reflected to me from viewing the felicity of those I love. You, Montagu, first through your name, and then by your own merits and your disinterested attachment to me, are become so dear to my affection, that you now hold an equal place in my regard with the child of my own beloved brother.

"You are both, Montagu, the children of my heart's adoption; and for the happiness of both I feel an equal, fond solicitude. The dire misfortunes of my life have raised an insuperable barrier to my ever marrying, therefore my titles and wealth you may look on as devoted to my adopted children; and not only the family pride of wishing the wealth still to centre with the titles makes me anxious for your union with Adelaide, but the affection I feel for you both leads me to hope to find your happiness inseparable.

"When last we all met at Roscoville I fondly believed my wish was realizing, and even, though immaturely, without a possibility of disappointment; and now, al-

though Adelaide has arisen into all, and perhaps more, of loveliness and excellence than she even then gave promise of, I have doubts conveyed to my mind that the realizing of these my fondest hopes is by no means certain.

"Montagu, since again we have met, I have been your anxious, often your pained observer, and I have remarked sufficient to raise my hopes to the highest altitude of certainty, and sufficient almost to annihilate them for ever; since for whole hours have I seen you hanging on the accents and gazing on the lovely form and face of my child with the most enraptured admiration, and have beheld you animated by her fascinations into your former self; then, then, my poor Montagu, I have seen the lorn aspect of sorrow and despair steal over your countenance—have seen you start from your seat beside her—fly from her presence, and return dejected and unsocial, and above all things shunning Adelaide. How is it, Bouverie, may I, dare I ask you to confide in me?"

Montagu snatched the hand of Lord De Moreland with tremulous emotion, pressed

it to his lips, to his heart; then starting from his seat, took several agitated turns along the room, and at length, with an aspect more composed, resumed his seat.

"My very dear lord and inestimable friend," he now tremulously said, "after such an affecting instance of the attachment you bear me, and of the exalted opinion you so unequivocally honour me with, I should prove the most reprehensible being amongst the defaulters in gratitude did I withhold my confidence from you, or dare the attempt of presenting myself as a suitor to the beautifully minded and moulded Adelaide, without laying every secret of my heart before the tribunal of your honour and your judgment.

"My lord, you have proved a most discriminating observer in all that relates to my feelings for your lovely blossom of perfection. It is most true, when last we met, even child as she then was, she had fascinated my heart in so extraordinary a degree, that the pang of parting from her was then the most anguished one I had ever known; and had I been the stationary being and Adelaide the traveller, that

fascination, I feel assured, would have remained invincible.

"But by changing scenes and varied occupations I was roused from and led from a constant contemplation of the virtues, the beauties of my young enslaver, and my station being removed to a country where beauty abounded, where my admiration was daily awakened for some lovely, young, and artless being, the image of Adelaide faded by degrees to a less prominent station in my remembrance, but never obliterated from my heart. When ordered to join the regiment at Malta I had exchanged into, I hastened to Seaview under the full conviction, the glowing hope, I was going thither to have those chains firmly rivetted which Adelaide in her early days had forged for me: but, alas! alas! Adelaide was absent; and I learned from what I have now found conviction of, the misrepresentation of envy and invidiousness, that she was no longer the Adelaide who fascinated reason, fancy, and the heart; and full of peevish disappointment relative to her, I quitted

Kent, and, most unfortunately, embarked in a few days after for Malta.

"As what I am now going to relate to you, my dear lord," continued the now most powerfully agitated Bouverie, "is the secret of another, whose fame is as fair as the immaculacy of her mind, you will, I trust, excuse the concealment of her name.

"I embarked in a frigate, in which there were a few passengers, and amongst whom, alas! was the wife of an officer, with two young children, going out to Malta to join her husband there; and some particular circumstances leading me, more peculiarly than any other man on board, to devote my attentions to her and her interesting infants, I unhesitatingly bestowed them on her, not once foreseeing the foundation of anguished misery I was laying for us both.

"You can readily conceive what a fascinating being I proved her to be, when she not only imperceptibly on this fatal voyage of ten weeks stole into my tenderest affections, but has acquired such influence

over my reason, my every faculty, that, alas! I fear vain, inutile must every effort prove to break from her power, and to give back fully to the lovely Adelaide the gentle, pleasing sway she once held over my heart.

"This fascinating woman, not more favoured by beauty than gifted with mental treasures, is arrived at that period of life when the timidity of excessive youth vails not every perfection from emanating in full radiance; for though in appearance much more juvenile, yet from the peerage, where her descent has placed her name, we learn she is now in her twenty-ninth year.

"This most perfect of nature's works—at least before I beheld Adelaide in maturity I decidedly thought her so—first discovered our mutual peril; and in about six weeks after our introduction to each other she suddenly estranged herself from my society, shrunk from my assiduities, and seemed so dejected, so unlike herself, that in alarm for her health, in terror lest I had unwittingly offended her, I implored, with such resistless influence upon a heart but

too partially disposed towards me, to learn the source of her altered conduct, that she confessed—oh! how did that confession, with its accompanying delicacy in the moment it was wrung from her, affect me!—'That she feared me! that the rapidly augmenting power I was acquiring over her mind had led her, as the only refuge for her peace, to shun me.'"

"Oh! my poor Montagu, what a lure, a flattering lure, was that for youthful inexperience!" exclaimed the agitated Lord De Moreland.

"Lure! my lord," replied Bouverie, with ill-concealed indignation, "it was the effusions of her artless mind, surprised and subdued by the first feelings of the most tender of human passions, for her husband had never awakened it: for at the age of fifteen, she told me, she had been sacrificed by her parents to a man who was ill calculated to touch her heart; a being who only derived happiness from the orgies of bacchanalian revels.

"On our arrival at Malta, this fascinating woman, from her husband's station, was homaged as a queen by her surround-

ing court, and I beheld her the magnet of attraction, the delight, the idol of each beholder; whilst from me alone she sighed for the allegiance of the heart; while from my situation—but hold, if I enter thus into particulars I must at once lead your lordship to discover who has thus made me a miserable man, separating me, I fear, from the most perfect happiness preparing for me in being, would she accept me, the husband of the peerless Adelaide.

"Suffice it to say, my lord, I was indulged, from circumstances, with the constant society of this most fascinating woman, when—"

"When you possessed notpower, most unfortunate young man, to resist the temptation prepared for you. Oh, Montagu! I anticipate all!" exclaimed his lordship, with much emotion.

"No, my lord," replied Bouverie, with warmth, "you do not anticipate correctly: you anticipate unjustly the immaculacy of the unfortunate woman whom I have made wretched through her attachment to me. My own individual misconduct you more truly anticipate; for allur-

ed on by full permission to talk upon, whenever opportunity was afforded to us, the subject of our Platonic passion—for such, from the feelings of her own bosom, she thought it could remain—I dared to forget the purity of her I adored, and my punishment was instant banishment from her presence for ever."

"Had that banishment taken place before such decided encouragement had been given you, I should form a very different idea of the sincerity of its motives than what I now do. But go on, Montagu; I see you relish not my comments, therefore I will not again interrupt you with them."

"Oh! my lord, pity my weakness, and forgive the impetuosity of an infatuated, miserable man. Interrupt me when you please, and make your comments unrestrainedly, for they will prove for my benefit," said Montagu, with affecting mildness.

"But," he continued, "the sentence of that banishment was direful to me, and nearly bereft me of life; for the anguish of my mind brought on a tiphus fever, which reduced me to the brink of the grave, and

the effect of which is still so visible in my aspect.

"By the goodness of Heaven, skilful care, and an unimpaired constitution, I recovered; and once more fully sensible of the misery that had subdued me, I seemed to loathe the life which had been spared to me; since by no means, without menace to the fame of her I adored, could I discover how she had borne the state her indignant virtue had reduced me to; and, sunk by the languor of recent illness and hapless despondence, I made no exertion to perfect my recovery until ships arrived from England, and amongst my letters brought me one from Adelaide!

"The human heart is often proved to be so paradoxical a thing, that it defies the analysis of man after it becomes perverted by our own caprices, our own inconsistencies. On my heart, devoted tenderly, ardently to another, this letter of Adelaide's, in the beautiful simplicity of her own nature, informing me of the melancholy death of a protegée of hers to whom I contributed my mite, made so inexplicablean impression, that it aroused me spontaneously from

despondence; led me, with almost maniac precipitance, to apply for instant leave of absence to return to England; here, while obeying the stern, inflexible mandate of Lady——Lucretia, if you please, to seek the restoration of my peace, my happiness, in the society of her most genial to them, the sweet, the innocent, the gentle, inestimable Adelaide.

"Promptly I obtained my leave of absence; when I wrote a penitential letter to the object of my adoration, informing her that, in obedience to her commands, I was going to England, unless she forgave me, and countermanded my departure. Her answer was firm to the cause of virtue, imploring me, for both our sakes, to fly from Malta, never to see her more, and, if possible, to marry and forget her: and that letter, as there is not even a betraying initial to it, I will shew you, to excuse in some degree the infatuation of my ardent passion for a woman so chaste from principle.

"Here, my lord, are my bane and antidote; the constant companions of my bosom:" and he drew forth a case containing the letter of her he had flown from, and of

her he had flown to. "Adelaide's I received first, and it shall have the precedence in your perusal, if you please, my lord."

Lord De Moreland, powerfully chagrined by the disappointments to his wishes which the recital of Montagu portended, took the letter of his niece in silence; and as he read the tender, delicate effusions of pity and forgiving charity for a fallen female, he hemmed, rubbed his eyes, changed his position, and repeatedly snuffed the wax candles, which wanted no such frequent decapitation, but all failed in effect—tears would flow; and Bouverie exclaimed—

"Attempt not, my lord, to suppress them; for if you have a particle of feeling in your composition, the artless pathos, the tender mercy, the gentle kindness of your immaculate Adelaide must call it forth in tears by that epistle.

"Here, my lord," said Bouverie, when his lordship had finished Adelaide's composition, "is a letter of a different nature, written in all the grandeur of a soul firm in its career to merit eternal glory."

Lord De Moreland read this second

epistle without a single variation of countenance, and returning it to Bouverie, he said—

"You expect a comment, I perceive, my dear Montagu, upon this epistle, or I own I would not make one; since what candor compels me to say may sound like jealousy's inspirations awakened for my Adelaide. This Lucretia of yours seems to have borrowed her style from foreign enthusiasts, who have written in the furor of their distempered imaginations upon the charms, the fascinations of Platonic passion, ardent as passion can be, and yet amenable to the control of every icy fetter of reason and principle.

"I know not the fair writer, but was I to form a judgment of her heart and virtue from this composition, I should, on honour, pronounce the one perverted, the other preserved through love of fame, not from sublimity of principle."

"Oh! say not so, my lord! Indeed you misconceive her."

"Possibly, as her style of writing is evidently borrowed. But merely judging as strangers would judge from the two letters

now before us, of how their respective writers would have expressed themselves on the subject of your transgression—Lady Lucretia, of course, in the style she has done; but the other, strangers would guaranty for, that she would never strive to inflame that passion she affected to discourage; never as——"

"Oh! Lord De Moreland, insult not Adelaide by a supposition that she could ever write on such a subject! for could a man be found so daring in libertinism to approach her with his unhallowed wishes, the pen of Adelaide would never sully itself by writing on such a theme."

The heart of Lord De Moreland triumphed; for here was full conviction that Adelaide held a more exalted station in the estimation of Montagu than his Platonic correspondent; and with a smile of hope revived, his lordship answered—

"We will drop the further discussion of these letters at present, for I am all impatience to hear if you really returned to England in the almost forlorn hope of Adelaide's proving an antidote to the

subtile poison you had so potently imbibed?"

"Absolutely."

"And how has this most romantically imagined antidote operated?"

"Inexplicably, my lord; for although on my voyage misery lay in the thought of finding my own project realized by her union with my brother; although a few moments since, and the idea of her acceptance of the Duke of St. Kilda filled my heart with anguish paradoxical, yet that very heart whispers to me that I must not dare to think of her for my wife."

"Not dare it, Montagu!"

"Oh! Lord De Moreland, finding Adelaide perfect in mind as in form, deserving every human happiness, dare I offer myself as a suitor to her with a heart that, however drawn by hours of admiration awakened by Adelaide from all remembrance of Malta and all that it contains, still at times reverts in sudden anguished reminiscence to its ardent attachment there; and in that reminiscence to writhe in agony at the terrific idea of what that lovely, ador-

ing being there might suffer was I to prove inconstant, was I indeed to obey the mandate of her enthusiastic virtue—'to marry, and forget her.'"

"But if still so attached, so infatuatedly attached to this woman, who seems rather mercilessly to have consigned you to sickness and despair, to prove she could transmute from fire to ice at will," said Lord De Moreland, gravely, "give me leave to say, it has not been playing fairly by Miss Bouverie, Montagu, in pursuit of a visionary antidote to an invincible though inauspicious passion, to hang on her accents, to gaze on her beauties for whole enraptured hours, to burst forth into all the ardent eulogiums of spontaneous admiration, giving her every reason to believe, and without one particle of deluding vanity on her part, that she had awakened in your bosom more than a common interest. Montagu, in this pursuit you seem to have forgotten your own transcendent perfections; forgotten that from her earliest days Adelaide fondly regarded you; so regarded you, that even your wish swayed her in an intended acceptance of a husband; and that in a

juvenile, artless mind like hers, how easy is the transition from such regard to the most tender of the passions. But still, I trust, the peace of my child is safe."

"Oh! heavenly protectors of innocence, avert every danger from the peace of Adelaide!" Montagu exclaimed, in an agony of alarm and contrition. "Oh! I see, I feel I have acted most reprehensibly, ere secure that from my heart was extirpated every trace of its late inauspicious passion: but, oh! if Adelaide should love me; if from her eyes could beam one ray like those which played eternally on me from the eyes of her I have fled from, Adelaide's power I feel conviction would be complete, invincible, unalienable."

"My dear Montagu, I can take upon myself to affirm, was Adelaide attached to you with even all the ardour of her enthusiastic nature, you never would see rays from her eyes like those which lately beamed their witchery upon you, therefore from that source your attachment to her is not likely to be effected; and unattached, you could not wish merely from motives of interest to become her husband,

neither could I permit it. All is, I trust, safe in the bosom of my inestimable child; and I will endeavour to become reconciled to what I own has proved a disappointment most severe to me."

"My lord," said Bouverie, impressively, "I thought it but just and honourable to lay before you the state of my affections; and after having candidly done so, let me further add, on the faith and honour of a Christian and a soldier, that still my only hope of the restoration of my happiness rests on Adelaide."

"Oh! Montagu, with your heart so devoted to another?"

"But that being I shall never more behold; for when I left Malta, her husband was in daily expectation of receiving a high appointment in India; and in that event I may safely say I shall never see her more: and as my passion is hopeless, and, from her sacred tie to another, criminal, believe me I no longer wish to cherish it; believe that the most strenuous exertions of my soul are toiling indefatigably to vanquish what I feel it culpable to nourish; and believe, also, that the conquest of my heart

by Adelaide is inevitable, though not immediate; for by whatever your lordship may consider most sacred I solemnly aver, that I would not forfeit the esteem of Adelaide to gain possession of the woman who sent me a miserable man to England; and further believe me, that did I but know she was not wretched in our separation, you would soon have no cause to doubt the truth of my assertions."

"Have you no friend at Malta in whom you could confide for such information?"

"Oh! my lord, that would implicate her spotless fame, by betraying her attachment."

"Will you indulge my curiosity by informing me did any strangers arrive in the island about the period of your implacable banishment from this fair Lucretia?"

"A detachment of the —— regiment arrived the day prior to my well merited banishment."

"Any men of rank or fortune in this detachment?"

"Lord Rochdale was amongst them: but why these questions, my dear lord?"

"Excuse me, Montagu; you will not

call me out to single combat if I venture to pronounce this fascinating enslaver of yours a vain jilt, who in the insatiate thirst for incense to her vanity, with which her husband supplies her not, attracts in her toils the young, the ingenuous, and unwary, until the passion she has implanted in their bosom menaces her fame. Review her conduct dispassionately. Did she not lure you on to love her; whence then this inconsistency? Why did she encourage you on against every law, divine and human, when she meant you no reward? Clearly it was to triumph in your misery, and her own prowess in virtue."

"Certainly, my lord, there is much presumptive proof in favour of your suspicions; yet it cannot lead me to condemn her, lest I should be unjust: however, I will meditate upon your suspicions, I will contemplate all things that can lead to banishing from my bosom the crime of loving the wife of another."

"Well, Montagu, and when you have succeeded, when you tell me you can become the suitor of my child without

endangering her peace, you shall have my full permission to address her."

Bouverie pressed the hand of his lordship with all the warmth of gratitude his kindness awakened, and after a mournful pause he said, with a sigh—

"And until I have exterminated this unfortunate, this reprehensibly formed attachment from my weak, my erring bosom, I must be contented to see the lovely being my better senses are all disposed to worship wooed by a man who by no misconduct impedes the way of his own suit: but, oh Heaven! should he obtain her, what then will become of me?"

"Why, my phenomenon! my man with two hearts!" exclaimed Lord De Moreland, smiling with augmenting hope, "you must then offer one of those hearts, whichever you find most tractable, to Lady Celestina: but, to give you comfort, I think I can guaranty your having little to apprehend from the Duke of St. Kilda, whom however, situated as you now are, Montagu, it is but just should be allowed a fair trial of winning the woman whom with

his whole, undivided heart he fervently adores."

"It is right, it is just," said Bouverie, with a painful sigh, as he struggled to bend his mind to acquiesce in its being so; "and if I lose this sweet and lovely blossom of innocence and beauty, I shall have the anguish to endure of knowing I deserved it."

"Well, good night, my poor Montagu! I will not detain you longer. Go to rest, now, and dream of the rival queens; but remember that on yourself depends the removal of my interdict to pressing your suit with Adelaide."

Bon soir being mutually interchanged, Montagu, with agitated mind and pensive step, slowly measured his way to his own chamber.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In his apartments, waiting for him, Montagu found his old and attached servant, Lee; who, under the guidance of Obearn, had now a warm jelly ready for his master, who tookit withgratitude,and exclaimed—

"But you were always kind to me in sickness, Lee. Can I ever forget how you nursed me at Malta, never once forsaking your station by my pillow?"

"Yes, once I did, Sir; when I disapproved of the fruit that was brought me for you, I ran to the general's to ask for some that I thought might tempt your appetite."

"Did you go the general's whilst I was ill?" demanded Bouverie, in breathless agitation. "And did you see any of—of the family?"

"Yes, my lady, Sir, who came by, leaning on the arm of an officer, as I was talking to the gardener; and seeing me, she stopped to inquire very kindly how you did; and as I answered 'that you were as

ill as man could be to be alive,' I could not for the soul of me help bursting into tears."

"My poor, attached fellow!" said the highly agitated Bouverie. "But pray, pray proceed."

"Lady Marian instantly walked on to the pavilion, where you used to pass so many hours in reading to her, without even saying she was sorry: but the officer was so moved, he remained to ask me a thousand kind questions about you; and when he followed my lady into the pavilion, I asked the gardener who that handsome young man was? and he answered the Earl of Rochdale, Sir; and that was all, Sir, I assure you it was."

"No, Lee, it was not all," said Bouverie, trembling with emotion; for the suspicions of Lord De Moreland, now full in his mind, awakened his own: "that was not all, your manner informs me it was not; therefore I request to hear all that really occurred."

"If you command me, Sir; but the gardener was a very low fellow, and possibly his tongue was no slander, but he sneeringly said—

"'Lord Rochdale luckily arrived in time to comfort my lady for the loss of your master's attendance, Mr. Lee; and, let me tell you, she seems to take to her comfort very kindly.'"

The heart agonized Bouverie made no comment to Lee, but very shortly after dismissed him for the night, saying he wished to read, and should not require his attendance further: but it was his own thoughts which Bouverie wished to read; and for hours after even the abbey revellers had retired to rest he sat in his chair by the expiring fire, or traversed his room, meditating upon the suspicions of Lord De Moreland, so nearly brought to proof by the testimony of Lee, whose veracity he could not doubt; and if he could not, then Lady Marian was, as Lord De Moreland had pronounced her, an errant jilt, and was going over the same ground of delusive fascination with Lord Rochdale she had lured him through; for that she had lured him on even his lenient delicacy to her could not lead him to deny to his own investigation, and therefore she was a wo-

man not worthy of a sigh for, and was no longer to be remembered as a barrier between him and his hopes of Adelaide.

But then all might not be as appearances proclaimed: she might have had sound and virtuous reasons for her apparent intimacy with Lord Rochdale; but then even so, and even if she had retreated to the pavilion to conceal emotions awakened by Lee, that intimacy clearly proved she could not have been so distressed at his dangerous illness as he should have expected a woman to be, so attached as she professed herself; and therefore he must reasonably suppose, that if he did effectually break from her chains he should not run any peril of breaking her heart; and as no misery seemed likely to accrue to her from his establishing his own felicity, the cogitations of his nocturnal meditation terminated in a resolution to seek the most certain road to the perfect restoration of his peace, and to the security of happiness to him through life, by becoming the husband of his lovely namesake, if she would accept him.

But as Lord De Moreland merited every thing of respondent generosity and honour

in conduct from him, he thought it but just to allow the Duke of St. Kilda a fair opportunity of pressing his suit, ere a man with a heart not completely weaned from an infatuating object should interfere: yet with fear and trembling he subscribed to this opinion; and as he believed it an impossibility to be constantly in the uninterrupted society of Adelaide in her uncle's apartment without breaking through a punctilio so discordant to his wishes, he felt it as an imperious necessity to abridge those hours of peril to his resolution; and therefore, in a short note to his lordship, he made his candid excuse for not attending his breakfast that morning, although, he added, "his sleeping and waking dreams of happiness through the night had all been mingled with his now anxiously hoped for union with the peerless Adelaide."

When our heroine attended the *dejeuné* of her uncle, she did not expect to find the invalid Bouverie there before her; but as minute after minute rolled on without his appearing, she began to experience an uneasy alarm, which escaped not the observation of his lordship: but when breakfast

commenced without him, she could no longer resist the impulse of saying, although apprehending the invincible consciousness of her manner as she spoke would betray too much anxiety in the question—

"She hoped illness did not detain Major Bouverie from their *dejeuné*?"

"Not illness, my love, but extreme fatigue," replied his lordship; "for I find, poor fellow! he passed a most restless night."

Adelaide blushed conspicuously, as a suggestion arose in her mind of the possibility of the duke's arrival having caused that restlessness. She had remarked how precipitately Montagu had arisen immediately after his grace had approached her, and how uncomfortable he had appeared in the seat he had retreated to, and these observations had destroyed some hours of her night's rest; and now, the moment she could sufficiently recover her composure again to speak, from some unconscious catenation in her thoughts, she was led to say—

"My dear uncle, do you not think it would be highly reprehensible and unfeel-

ing in the Duke of St. Kilda to remain here for the ball on Wednesday night, so soon after the death of an amiable relative by so fatal a catastrophe?"

"Did his grace ask your opinion upon the subject, my love?"

"No, my lord; but I think it will be a very improper thing if he stays; and I do hope and wish he may not."

"Why, Adelaide, why are you so interested in the propriety of the duke's actions as to wish the poor man to take flight before he has rested himself after his long journey?"

"My dear uncle, I am not, believe me, in the smallest degree interested about his propriety of action," exclaimed Adelaide, with her cheeks again mantled by the brightest tints of vermilion; "but it will be so very much for the comfort of poor—Ambrosia, if he goes——"

"What can the Duke of St. Kilda have to say to the comfort of Ambrosia? Surely her love fit for him has not returned, now she has raised the insuperable barrier of a husband between them?"

"Oh! no, no, my lord," exclaimed Ade-

laide, in terror lest any thing she had said to veil her own embarrassment could have awakened such a suspicion: "but her sisters have sent the information round to every inmate here of the duke's being a despairing lover of Ambrosia's; and there were so many speculating whispers of what his hopes could be now through the rooms last night, that I am sure she must wish for his absence."

"And what says Theodore to it?"

"Oh! nobody mentions it to him, of course."

"Do not be too certain of that, Adelaide: and how would the conscience of the Ladies Leyburn feel, if, through their ill natured and indecorous reports of the duke's attachment to their sister, they were to awaken such jealousy in the husband's mind as to produce some fatal consequence between him and the supposed lover of his wife?"

"Oh! my dear uncle," said the terrorized Adelaide, "had I not better inform Ambrosia of your too reasonably founded apprehensions, that she may instantly im-

part these reports herself to her husband, and from whom they originated?"

"I think you had, my love; and I will instruct Montagu to relieve the mind of his brother from every apprehension."

Immediately after breakfast, Adelaide sought her cousin, but in vain; for Theodore told her she had breakfasted *tête-à-tête* with her mother, and had just sent him word "she was going with a select party to Windsor."

"So very select that I am not admitted of it," he added, forcing a smile, for smiling was at this moment very foreign to his heart; as his wife had told him all the speculating surmises relative to the Duke of St. Kilda's visit to Roscoville with such ill disguised exultation, that he feared her vanity was incorrigible, and would, under the tuition of her mother, prove the bane of their domestic comfort, and he was sad at heart.

At this moment Montagu entered, and paid his morning compliments to Adelaide with such an air of conscious embarrassment and stateliness, that her speculating

wonder was much excited; and wonder too, how that fatigue which caused his absence from her uncle's *dejeuné* should permit him so immediately after it to quit his chamber.

"I am happy to perceive, Major Bouverie," she said, with something of respondent stateliness, "the fatigue you complained of has not compelled your confinement to your chamber much later than usual."

"You are very good, Miss Bouverie, to feel any interest for my indispositions; but thinking a little air the best restorative after a restless night, I determined to request you, Theodore, to take me a little excursion: but I find your curricle has other employment, being in requisition for this party, which I confess drew me thus early from my room, that I might see it start."

Theodore, resolved to learn who had taken the liberty of calling his curricle into requisition without deigning to request his permission, was hastening away to inquire, when the entrance of the Duke of St. Kilda prevented his departure.

"But, Miss Bouverie," exclaimed his

grace, after his animated morning greetings were paid, "our party is almost immediately setting out, and you are not ready."

"I am not one of the party to Windsor, duke," she replied.

"Not one of the party!" his grace exclaimed, with such an unequivocal expression of dismayed disappointment, that seemed at once to remove a mill-stone from the centre of Theodore's heart.

"Not of this party, Adelaide!" reiterated Montagu, with equal amazement, but with more joyful expression than the disappointed duke.

"*Miss Bouverie*," said Adelaide, with marked emphasis, "is never honoured by being of Lady Leyburn's parties."

"Oh! how unfortunate my not knowing this before I—I—that is, before I—for then, perhaps, I should not so sensibly feel the disappointment," his grace faltered out, in a tone so expressive of chagrin, it could not be misconceived.

At this moment Lady Leyburn appeared, and gaily flying to his grace, took his arm, as she exclaimed—

"Let us take the road. Theodore, I make no apology for taking your curricle into requisition, since it is for the accommodation of your wife, whom I confide to the care of the best charioteer I know. Duke, you will be the companion and charioteer of my darling child: I depute you to take care of my lovely Ambrosia for me."

And now, in her resistless style of determined, impellent influence, her ladyship hurried the reluctant duke away, without allowing the astonished Theodore to utter a syllable until she had vanished with her prey, when he indignantly exclaimed—

"By all that is easy! the coolest thing I have lately met with, to give my wife and carriage to another man without so much ceremony as a 'By your leave, Jerry, my compliant fellow!'"

"A most singular method, certainly, of evincing maternal freedom," said Montagu, in amazed displeasure; but although I think you have just had strong evidence you have nothing to apprehend from this impressed charioteer, yet I suppose you will find, without delay, a prudent employ-

ment for your carriage in removing your wife from the guidance of such a mother."

Adelaide, feeling that her presence must be a restraint upon the conversation of the brothers, made now a prompt excuse for leaving them; when Montagu flying to the door to open it for her, and with a quick, nervous shortness of respiration, as if his fate hung on her answer, he lowly, impressively said to her—

"Adelaide, does the duke claim my pity? Were his the only pangs of disappointment at your not forming one of this party?"

"When you question me in a sacerdotal robe, and from beneath a cowl, I will answer you," she replied, smiling; "in the meantime marvel if I do feel disappointment at how well I can sustain it."

Montagu was cheered: he felt conviction that yet the Duke of St. Kilda was no successful rival; and smiling with hope revived he returned to his brother, who, assured beyond a doubt of whom the attraction of his Grace of St. Kilda to Roscoville Abbey was, had promptly formed

a plan for the cure of Lady Ambrosia's vanity, which he hastened to impart to Montagu.

The plan of Theodore was to remain at Roscoville until the vanity of Lady Ambrosia found a salutary humiliation in the public discovery that Miss Bouverie was the magnet; that Miss Bouverie had made serious captivation of the man she had vauntingly boasted was enslaved for life by her: and this plan Montagu approved of; for though a harsh one, it augured auspiciously, and seemed to wear the further promise of not only reconciling the vain Ambrosia, in the moment of her mortification, to a removal to her husband's cottage, but make her even anxious for its shelter.

Adelaide had hastened from the too interesting Montagu to her own apartments, to meditate upon and wonder what he meant by his parting question to her; and long she had not contemplated upon the obvious solution which she feared to give it, when a message from her uncle summoned her to a pedestrian excursion with him.

"I purposed taking you a more extended airing, my dear child," said his lordship, "but I find I have no horses; since the few which the economy of Lady Leyburn permitted her to retain after my detention in France are all taken by her party to Windsor."

When Lord De Moreland and his fair companion had finished their walk, they repaired to the library, to arrange some more of the chaos of papers, and there found Montagu Bouverie busily employed, and who the moment they appeared exclaimed—

"I expect infinite commendation for my industry. See, my lord, the heap I have arranged!"

"How came you so much more diligent to-day than usual, my good fellow?" asked his lordship.

"Why from having nothing to look at to call off my attention to-day, I was industrious in my own defence, as a good specific against *ennui*. I soon became weary of walking, and then came hither, after writing to town for a curricle and some good horses to be sent me down without

delay; which, with your good leave, my lord, I shall billet at the inn, to avoid those unexpected requisitions which make a man look so like a fool: and indeed I could not longer endure to be so very a scrub as not to possess even a wheelbarrow to jaunt poor Adelaide about in, as I have done in in my time, should she again chance to prefer such a mode of exercise to walking."

"Poor Adelaide's uncle is as miserable a scrub in the same way, having, it seems, only a few cart horses left to air her upon," replied his lordship, smiling with auspicious anticipations; and stealing a glance of scrutiny at her, added—

"But you need not blush so for our poverty, my love, since we will endeavour to make a better figure in the world."

Bouverie, totally forgetful of his generous intentions relative to the poor Duke of St. Kilda's suit, now again seemed to hang on the accents and gaze on the beauties of Adelaide, as if they were the food of life and animation to his happiness; and not until the first dinner bell rang did this trio separate.

Adelaide, anxious for a conference with

Lady Ambrosia, to prove, if necessary, what she sometimes did, an antidote to the poisons of Lady Leyburn's counsels, hastened her toilet; and the moment it was completed despatched Obearn to say, "that if her ladyship was disengaged she would sit half an hour with her, ere they repaired to the drawing-room:" but soon Obearn returned with Lady Ambrosia's compliments, "who was sorry to decline Miss Bouverie's intended favour, as she was too much fatigued by her excursion to endure the harass of talking."

Adelaide was shocked and distressed at this negative, which boded nothing auspicious to the happiness of her cousin; but at length the assembling bell rang, and instantly she hastened to the drawing-room, determined not to wait for Lady Ambrosia, who always called for her, that they might enter together.

For some moments Adelaide had the drawing-room to herself; but soon the numerous guests began to enter, and amongst the first was the Duke of St. Kilda, who instantly darted to a seat beside her.

"This is beyond my hopes," he said, "to find a vacant place by you; although I made all possible speed in dressing, knowing you are ever amongst the first assemblers for dinner."

"Your grace thinks," said Adelaide, smiling, "that, like Captain Buck, of your regiment, my appetite impels my punctuality."

"Heavens! no. Surely I could not but observe it was the reluctance of timidity to enter a full room that actuated your speed."

"Your party proved a pleasant one to Windsor, I hope?" said Adelaide.

"Wasnot my companion your friend and relative, Miss Bouverie, I would answer, with sincerity, I thought the morning passed on leaden measure, and never would terminate; yet, even consistently with *politesse* to your friendship, I may acknowledge my situation was not the most comfortable in the world: thrust by Lady Leyburn into the carriage of a man without even asking his permission, and ordered to play the part of cicisbeo to a wife whom my most agreeable hostess informed

me 'was wedded to a husband so absurdly, so unreasonably jealous, she had determined to effect his cure by salutary alarms.'"

At this moment Lady Leyburn entered, with her daughter Ambrosia, most alluringly attired, leaning on her arm, and whose air proclaimed triumphant consciousness of surpassing beauty.

On unexpectedly beholding Adelaide in the drawing-room, Lady Ambrosia started, as she perceived by it her cousin had not condescended to wait for her. Lady Leyburn started too, but it was on perceiving the duke seated by her hated niece, who looked more alarmingly beautiful than she had ever before beheld her; when instantly she determined to approach this detested being, to call off the duke from a situation so menacing to her projects.

"I am sorry, Adelaide," said Lady Ambrosia, with an air of mingled *hauteur* and embarrassment, "that I could not admit you when you requested an audience in my dressing-room; but really I was so subdued, I feared talking would annihilate me."

"Oh! as to that," replied Adelaide, in

a tone of perfect unconcern, "great personages cannot be expected at all times to grant *audinces* to the multitude; but as I had no favour to importune for, it was not a matter of very deeply felt mortification."

"Since this subjugation of strength and spirits, which apprehended annihilation from the dulcet accents of Miss Bouverie," said his grace, smiling, "appears to have been but temporary, I may rejoice at its influence, as I had the honour, the good fortune, the happiness to gain that society which your ladyship rejected."

"Mighty gallant, truly!" exclaimed Lady Leyburn, with a sneer. "But come, duke, I want to have a little serious confab with you about Sir Charles Longuiville and others of my old friends in your regiment."

"I must obey my hostess," said the duke in a low tone to Adelaide, as he reluctantly arose to attend the mother and daughter to a *chaise longue*; where he was placed between them, and where Lady Ambrosia set off the whole artillery of her charms, and Lady Leyburn displayed her eloquence.

Adelaide felt relieved by this manœuvre of her aunt's, since she feared every word of common urbanity she uttered to the duke might be construed by him or Montagu into encouragement to him, was he really her suitor; but very different were the sensations she experienced when his grace's vacant seat was instantly occupied by Montagu, who now as anxious to obtain Adelaide as Lord De Moreland could wish him, with sophistical ingenuity argued that it could be no breach of compact with Lord De Moreland to enter the field when the duke marched out of it, apparently to seek new conquest: not, we grieve to say, that Montagu's improper attachment was subdued; but his reason, his judgment, his forcibly awakened admiration, nay his very heart united in whispering to his conviction that an union with Adelaide would effectually obliterate the image of Lady Marian from his bosom, restore his peace, and yield him every happiness that mortal's life could know.

Scarcely had Montagu taken his station by Adelaide, when Theodore entered the room; who, perceiving where the Duke of

St. Kilda was seated, instantly walked up to him, and gracefully presenting his hand, thanked him for the kind care he had taken of his *cara sposa* in their excursion, with an unaffected degree of cordiality that highly disconcerted Lady Leyburn, since it sadly menaced the credit of her representations of her son-in-law's inflammable propensity to jealousy.

Dinner was at length announced, when Lady Leyburn gaily exclaimed, "My lords and gentlemen, cicisbeos of the morning, lead the fair companions of your excursion to dinner; for it is my sovereign will, as lady of the abbey, that ye be not divided for the remainder of this day."

"Have I your permission, Mr. Bouverie?" said the duke, as with ungallant reluctance he took the ready hand of the beautiful Ambrosia.

"Since I am out-lawed from that happiness myself, I know of no man into whose care I would sooner confide her than the Duke of St. Kilda's," replied Theodore, with a degree of composure that highly disconcerted Lady Leyburn, and much offended the piqued vanity of her daughter.

"Adelaide," said Montagu, with a smile, "I find from this arrangement no cicisbeo is left for you but your poor invalid friend, Bouverie. Can you survive a mandate that decrees no hope of a better fate for you through this whole day?"

"I will endeavour," replied Adelaide, with a responding smile, so enchanting, that Montagu gazed enraptured, and doubted if Lady Marian ever beamed a smile so fascinating.

Amongst the abbey inmates was now a Mr. Westland, a dramatic amateur, who had promised to perform that evening some of his recitations, and a proverb dramatised; and as Lord De Moreland was a very temperate man, that some of the gentlemen had to prepare themselves for the theatricals, and others feeling greater attraction in the drawing-room than the dining-hall, they did not make their separation very long from their fair expectants; and the moment Mr. Westland adjourned to the drawing-room he placed himself by Lady Ambrosia, and in a tone quite audible enough for all present to hear him, began to importune her ladyship to per-

suade her lovely cousin to join in their theatricals.

"What! Miss Bouverie," exclaimed her ladyship, laughing, "to play Priscilla Tomboy, I presume?"

"Oh! no. The child of nature, in the full perfection of nature's child," exclaimed Mr. Westland.

"But what am I to perform?" demanded her ladyship, impatiently.

"Oh! for you we must get up the Golden Pippin.—Venus by your ladyship, against the world; Juno, Lady Leyburn; and Pallas, my Lady Seraphina."

"And Paris! who shall he be, who is to give judgment in my favour?" said Lady Ambrosia, giggling.

"That admits not of a question. Your *caro sposo* is formed for that beautiful youth. I do not quite recollect the dramatis personæ of this piece; but if all the gods are introduced, we can be at no loss for the representative of Apollo where Major Bouverie is; Mercury, your humble servant; Jove—

"But my cousin? Is she to be Iris, or what?"

"Oh! we must adapt a character for her, by blending the three Graces into one."

"Bravo! Mr. Westland," exclaimed the Duke of St. Kilda, in a tone of enthusiasm. "If you adapt all characters so appropriately, the judgment of Mercury will become as celebrated as the judgment of Paris."

The exhibitions of the evening soon commenced; and during which, through the arrangement of Lady Leyburn, the Duke of St. Kilda was compelled to perform Lady Ambrosia's cicisbeo, and for the evening lost every opportunity of paying those attentions to Adelaide he panted to devote to her; and with such alarm he beheld Major Bouverie's assiduities to her, that he determined on the morrow to confess to Lady Leyburn his attraction to Roscoville, and to implore her ladyship no longer cruelly to impede his hopes, his prospects of success.

CHAPTER XIX.

On the subsequent morning, scarcely had Lord De Moreland entered his own suite of apartments when Montagu Bouverie joined him, so occupied by his own thoughts that he observed not his lordship's countenance proclaimed less tranquillity of mind than it had done since his return from France.

"Montagu!" exclaimed his lordship, the moment he appeared—"Montague visible before Adelaide! Why I thought, my steady fellow; you had resolved to avoid, as much as possible, meeting my child in these apartments, until the Duke of St. Kilda's suit was determined."

"Why so I had resolved yesterday, my lord, ere I sallied from my chambers," replied Montagu, smiling much more animatedly than he was lately wont to do. "But the events of yesterday produced a counter determination in my mind, and led me to seek you ere that angelic being, whom I presumptuously feel a sort of in-

vincible presentiment was created to prove the balm to all my wounds and griefs, appears.

"My dear lord, I am eager to tell you, that for all the hours I yesterday passed near Adelaide scarcely one truant thought strayed from her to Malta. Whilst contemplating her seraphic form and face; whilst listening to her, dulcet accents, timidly betraying her mental treasures, I think almost exclusively of her, and the happiness that must be mine, if the blessing of her affection is for me; and in her presence every pang of my unlawful passion is hushed, as if in respect to the purity of Adelaide.

"If, my dear lord, her presence has such influence over my mind, my heart, ere I seek her love, oh! my best friend, think what it must prove if I should win her!—Surely, surely then I must believe no rival could contend with Adelaide tenderly attached to me; and as your lordship has done me the honour of preferring me for the envied husband of your peerless child, oh! must I not be an idiot, an insensate, whose restoration to peace, whose

happiness no longer merits the guardian kindness of my good destiny in you, if I hesitated one moment longer to embrace an overture so teeming with every auspicious promise for me?"

Lord De Moreland grasped the hand of Bouverie with fervour, as joyfully he exclaimed—

"Montagu, if you dare ask for the hand of my child, I dare confide her happiness to you; for if your heart did not impel you to the measure, I am firm in conviction your honour would command you to desist. Then woo my darling; you have my full consent, and my best wishes for success to attend you; and perhaps we shall prove ourselves truer friends to the Duke of St. Kilda by not allowing him to proceed in the delusion of flattering expectation, until his heart became too firm in attachment easily to know alienation.

"You perceive, my dear Montagu, my ardent wishes for your success make me sanguine in my expectation of it; for if you should win my child's affection, what a weight of anxiety you will remove from my bosom! Nay, my hope has lightened

my heart already of an oppressive burden of apprehensions for the safety of my Adelaide. Baronello, who arrived last night, has brought me intelligence, my dear Montagu, that arbitrarily demands my absence from my now poor, insulated child once more; and could I leave her in the protection of a tender husband, how would every alarm for her peace, her fame, her safety, all menaced by Lady Leyburn, be hushed to rest!"

Alarm for the safety of Lord De Moreland thrilled through the heart of Bouverie, accompanied by a sensation almost painful at the thus implied wish for his speedy union with Adelaide, which would bring the moment near when it would become a still greater crime to think with ardent tenderness of Lady Marian.

"My dear lord, what is it I hear?" exclaimed Bouverie, after a momentary pause, in which his venerating thoughts reverting to Adelaide, restored to him a steady voice. "What new peril do you thus find yourself under the necessity to encounter?—Not, not to the continent must you go, I trust."

"I trust not, but yet it is possible; and therefore I own I wish your heart was further advanced in its progress of love for Adelaide, since then I should hope—hope every thing auspicious to my wish of leaving my child in the arms of tender protection; not as now, with a home at Mrs. Aspenfield's upon sufferance, still liable to be torn from her by the influence of Mrs. Falkland, whose cruel and unjust conduct to my Adelaide has thrown her into so delicate a situation, that I dare not take her from Mrs. Aspenfield's protection unless to my own, or to give her to a husband's without hazarding the calumny of its being said by Lady Leyburn's emissaries the mother of Mrs. Falkland condemned her too."

"Most willingly would I remove every anxiety, every difficulty for the safety of Adelaide, my lord," said Montagu, "by taking her this moment to my own protection, as my blessing, my honour, my pride, if my doing so depended upon me alone; but, my dear lord, I have not yet even commenced the siege of Adelaide's heart, and who can tell it will ever sur-

render to me, since early friendship, mingled with her native gentleness, and with the tender pity of her benevolence for my apparent ill health, may only gift with a flattering aspect her kindness and attention to me; and when I reflect upon what a barrier my honest confessions to her of the state of my heart may raise, how can I dare to cherish any ray of hope?"

"My dear Montagu," exclaimed his lordship, in alarm, "you cannot mean to confess to Adelaide an attachment you are thus determined to subdue?"

"Assuredly, my lord; for could I in honour, could I in conscience address her, and have any concealment from her of the state of my affections?"

"And how could you address her, and make such a confession? Nay, nay, my dear Montagu, in quixotism of honour and conscience implant no suspicion in the mind of your wife, to embitter her future repose. If you are, as I believe you, firm in your determination of conquering this unfortunate infatuation, and giving at length an undivided heart to Adelaide, forbear ever to inform her of the potent

rival she has had. If I augur truly, Montagu, the heart of my child will become tenderly and unalienably devoted to you; and rend it not, I conjure you, by doubts and fears, which I pronounce will become the chimera of vain apprehensions when the youthful Adelaide arrives at the full perfection of her yet but blossoming charms, and is the wife of your bosom, the friend of your heart—nay more, the mother of your children. Yes, Bouverie, I pronounce, with prophetic inspiration, the husband of my Adelaide will not long retain a passion in his breast that can find no hope to cherish it but that which is reared upon the dire basis of guilt."

At this moment Adelaide made her appearance, with an aspect so attractive in innocence and timid beauty, that Montagu felt new conviction that she must succeed in erasing the image of Lady Marian from his bosom; and when, after paying her morning duty to her uncle, she made her inquiries for Bouverie's health, the tones in which they were uttered thrilled with consolation's balms to his

heart, in the flattering earnest of future, tender, reciprocal attachment.

During breakfast Lord De Moreland announced to our heroine that he must leave her very speedily.

Adelaide, turning pale as the shade of death, flung herself upon her uncle's bosom, exclaiming, in all the tremulous emotion of direful alarm—

"Leave me, leave me not, I conjure you, my own uncle; but take me with you! Let me share your perils, whithersoever you go; and confide in my promise that you shall not find me troublesome, no not even with my fears."

"My sweet, affectionate child! I am going to encounter no peril. I am merely going to Ireland upon urgent business; but as I have many disagreeables to expect in searching out a man I am but vaguely directed to, I cannot take you with me; and must trespass on your kind friends in Kent, by leaving my child to their care during an absence which, I trust, will not exceed three weeks."

"Three weeks only!" repeated Ade-

laide, her bloom remantling to its former animation; then, then I hope you will persuade our invalid friend here to accompany you, my uncle, for I am sure the change of air and scene would do him good; and at Roscoville there is nothing very genial to his health to be expected."

"But cannot I go with you into Kent, dear, dear Adelaide?" exclaimed Bouverie, gratefully pressing her hand to his lips.

"Oh! no," replied Adelaide, brightly blushing, and so agitated that her emotion betrayed itself in the tremor of the hand he still detained, "you cannot go to Mrs. Aspenfield's: there is, alas! no Mr. Falkland now in Kent, to receive and make you well; and at De Moreland Castle you would be alone."

"At this rate, Montagu," said his lordship, smiling, "you have no alternative but to come with me: and I think with this urchin the excursion may prove of use to you."

"And on our return, my dear lord, I trust you will find out some habitation for yourself and me beneath the same roof with Adelaide."

"Why that I fear will be difficult to manage, as I shall have much business to transact with my lawyers on my return, which must be all arranged in this very mansion, where I cannot insure you a cordial reception from my sister if you offend her by non-compliance with her grandfather's commands. Adelaide, I think you have not heard the late Lord De Moreland, it seems, was so unreasonable to poor Montagu as to specify his being compelled to marry one of his lordship's great-grandaughters, or forfeit some material advantages hitherto annexed to the title."

"Then I am sure I would forfeit them," said Adelaide, with quickness, and blushing yet more deeply, on feeling she had blushed at the intelligence.

"Why forfeit them, my love?"

"Oh! because I am very sure, my lord, poor Major Bouverie could not be happy with either of the two who are left:—with Ambrosia, indeed, the case might have been otherwise."

"My Adelaide seems to forget there is yet a third great-grandaughter of this unreasonable lord unmarried, whom a man

might contrive to be tolerably happy with," said his lordship, smiling.

"Adelaide believes that Lady Leyburn had no intention of marking out so enviable a lot for me when she made this wish of her grandfather's known to your lordship," said Montagu, anxiously.

"What think you, Adelaide; is this really your opinion?" said Lord De Moreland, archly.

"Indeed, my lord," replied our painfully agitated heroine, in all the betraying *naïveté* of her guileless nature, "I am sure her ladyship forgot that third as much as I did when I spoke; since for that individual she cherishes too little regard to open to her a chance of perfect happiness."

"Oh, Adelaide!" exclaimed Bouverie, catching the trembling hands of the agitated girl, now awakened to a sense of what her speech had implied, and pressing them with fervour to his lips, to his heart—"dare I but cherish the fond, the flattering hope that you could ever be led to consider a union with me the road to perfect happiness, what an enviable mortal

should I deem myself, favoured most eminently by partial Heaven!"

"Well, well, we shall try what can be effected when we return from Ireland, Montagu," said Lord De Moreland, endeavouring now a little to correct his own impetuosity, which had led Bouverie perhaps too precipitately to this declaration, which now must fetter his honour, ere, perhaps, his heart quite sanctioned his addressing Adelaide. "When we get into the same house together, in some atmosphere more genial to unfolding characters of timid girls than the present chilling one of Roscoville, we will try what can be done in the mutual captivation of Montagu and Adelaide, since I confess I should not die of regret if such an improbable event was to come to pass."

"Not improbable on the part of Montagu, my dear lord," exclaimed Bouverie, with animation; "who, not waiting to behold Adelaide in that atmosphere genial to the perfect unfolding of her varied excellence, has discovered so much to fascinate even through the concealing veil of sweet timidity, that it has now become the

earnest wish of his heart to obtain permission for entering the lists with the numerous candidates for her favour."

"You shall have my permission, Montagu, if you can obtain Adelaide's," replied Lord De Moreland; "who, I dare say, will have sufficient candour, ere we depart for Ireland, to tell you—if she can but find courage to utter it—whether you stand as good a chance in those lists as any of your competitors. Come, my child," continued his lordship, catching her in his arms, and hiding her blushing face upon his bosom, "what say you? Do you think you shall ever summon up courage to bid Montague hope, or to tell him to despair?"

"Never for the latter purpose, my dear uncle," Adelaide timidly and tremulously articulated; and though low was the silvery sound, meant only for his lordship's ear, Montagu caught every dulcet accent, and in a transport of gratitude he took her trembling hand, and pressed it with fervor to his throbbing heart, which now felt its fate decided; and though anxious to consecrate Adelaide as its earthly idol, found,

in shuddering chill, distillations from the inshrined image of Lady Marian dropping fast upon the rising flame in hostile effort to extinguish it.

When Bouverie's homage to the hand of Adelaide was ended, Lord De Moreland, with solemn emphasis, pronounced a fervent aspiration for every happiness to attend this projected alliance, which he cherished no doubt would prove the source of every blessing under heaven to these loved children of his heart's adoption.

His lordship perceiving how sensibly Adelaide was affected by his aspiration, and overpowered by her bashfulness, now talked of the arrangements for his journey, which he wished to commence the earliest possible moment; and scarcely had he announced his plans when a servant entered with a message from Lady Leyburn, "requesting to see his lordship and Miss Bouverie in the conservatory at twelve o'clock, to afford their assistance in making wreathes for the supper and ball-rooms."

"But," added the footman, "your at-

tendance, Major Bouverie, will be required an hour earlier, to aid in gathering the flowers for the ladies."

"I do not understand precisely the nature of the employment you have summoned me to, Mr. John," said Montagu.

"Lauk, sir! 'tis one of the most *elegantest as* can be," replied John, with a look of pity for his ignorance: "'tis one as we lately struck out for *gemin*, to pay *paticlar* attention to favourite ladies, without hurting the feelings of others by open preference: so, sir, we *haves* baskets placed in the conservatory *winders*, marked by different ribbons. The *gemin* then *goes* to the green-*housen*, and selects for the lady he does or wishes to *keep company with*; and the more admirers each lady has, the more fuller her basket is; and this it is as makes our young ladies so *paticlar* fond of this way of making the garlands for our balls, as they always *comes* off with *a claw*, as they always gets by far the most *beautifullest* show of *bow kitts*."

"Our compliments, and we will have the honour of attending Lady Leyburn's summons," said Lord De Moreland, impatient

to get rid of this obliging informer, who now promptly retired.

"What sort of flowers must I select for you? what makes the prettiest wreathes? what do you like best, my Adelaide?" said Bouverie.

The sound of *my* Adelaide so electrified her susceptibility, it destroyed her power of promptly answering; and after a tremulous effort or two she succeeded in articulating a negative to his toiling to gather flowers for her.

"I shall be much happier in the gardener's bounty to me," she added, "since you are going a very long journey, and your fatiguing yourself would be no great gratification to—to my uncle, who is always interested about you."

"I can derive no fatigue from any employment that can evince my homage to you," said Bouverie, taking her hand with a grateful pressure; "and believe me, my health will hourly find its benefit from the sweet, the balmy influence you have distilled from hope's most precious stores for me; and shall I ungratefully remain idle, and allow others to triumph over you

through the exertions of their more active adorers?"

"I think I can supply you with homage to Adelaide without fatigue," said Lord de Moreland, smiling, "since I have ordered a carriage to be in readiness at ten to take me to Coke's, to leave some papers there. Do you accompany me, Montagu, and I will be guarantee for your procuring at Rose's nursery-ground something to pay your flowery compliments to the nymph of your choice."

The carriage being shortly after announced, Lord De Moreland and Bouverie were preparing to depart, when Adelaide, in trembling perturbation, summoned her uncle to a private conference in one of the deep window recesses; where, after a succession of the brightest blushes that ever glowed on the cheeks of lovely bashfulness, she in a scarcely audible whisper requested to know—

"If what Montagu had said was so seriously in earnest that she might venture to inform her nurse? who would be so glad: and above all, was it of sufficiently serious meaning for her to write to her dear, her

good, her tender guardian, to announce it to him, and recal him to his home?"

Lord De Moreland, with a difficultly suppressed smile at Adelaide's *naïveté*, assured her, "that Bouverie was so seriously in earnest, that she might venture to make Obearn glad; but that as disappointment was the lot of mortality, she had better not yet write to recal her guardian, at least not until they returned from Ireland."

Adelaide sighed, to think that one of the greatest charms she found in the idea of her union with Montagu, and which had impelled her to so prompt an avowal of her partiality, was thus disappointed; and that her dear, dear guardian was doomed to hear this important secret the last of all her friends, when her heart would have led her to make his breast the first sanctuary of her confidence.

The fascinating aspect of our heroine's confusion in her whisper, Lord De Moreland's ill suppressed smile and look of fond approving rapture, with Adelaide's after sigh and pensive look, so combined to awaken the anxious curiosity of Montagu, that he implored to know what she had

said; particularly as he feared his lordship's answer had not made her happy: when Lord De Moreland requiring but little persuasion to unfold the artlessness of Adelaide, frankly informed him, and in her own words.

This *naïveté* came with resistless effect in charming Montagu; who arresting Adelaide in an attempted flight, entreated Lord De Moreland to forgive his pleading for the lovely ward of Falkland being permitted by his lordship immediately to write to her guardian, and recal him.

"Since, my lord," he added, "if Adelaide will bless me with the treasure of her hand, and that you repent not of your kind concurrence, there is surely nothing but death that can prevent our union. Then why should my Adelaide delay that homage of her duty, her affection, which her grateful heart pants to pay to her most amiable guardian? why delay intelligence that can scarcely fail of recalling him to his country? Pray, my lord, permit Adelaide to write, that the interdict may be removed from my addressing the inestimable Falkland myself, to pour out my gratitude for

rearing his lovely ward to be the pride, the blessing of her happy husband."

"My wish for delay was solely founded on the instability of human events and human wishes," replied his lordship, impressively; "but since you, my dear Montagu, think my caution groundless, let Adelaide write to him, who merits every attention, every homage of a grateful child, from her."

Adelaide now, in fond hope of a speedy restoration to the domestic peace of Falkland, hastened to her dressing-room, to write the glad intelligence that removed the interdict to addressing her guardian; but ere she commenced her composition, she, in all the agitation of her varied feelings, threw herself upon her faithful Norah's bosom, and tremulously exclaimed—

"Oh, my beloved nurse! your grateful charge is to be amongst the most favoured of mortals, the happiest of women!"

"You have then accepted the Duke of St. Kilda?" replied Obearn, in a tone that expressed no satisfaction.

"No, Norah, not the duke, but my long loved as a brother, my now loved as my

future treasure, Montagu Bouverie. Yes, indeed, it is very true, and my dear uncle has given his most cordial assent; and what is more, my nursy, so did I, in a very indecorously prodigious hurry, I believe; but I could not help it, my heart so panted for the restoration of my own guardian's peace; and I was so glad the only man in the world I had that dear guardian's sanction to accept asked me to have him, that I only wonder I did not frighten him terribly by flying to kiss him heartily in the gladness of my grateful raptures; but notwithstanding my haste to give hope, they never can think of marrying me until I am twenty, to be sure; for, for ——" And now the swelling tears of agitated joy, which had been rising to a current since her head had sunk upon the bosom of this maternal friend, would no longer be controlled, and stopped her further utterance; whilst as Obearn mingled her tears of emotion with her nursling's, ten thousand blessings and wishes burst from her heart in aspirations for every portion of mortal happiness to be the lot of her adored child,

and the man she had always hoped might be her Adelaide's husband.

"But do not fear, my nursy," at length said Adelaide, "that I shall love you less than I now do when I am married; so mind you are not broken-hearted, as I was, my Norah, when my dear guardian married, and that I feared he loved his little *elève* no longer."

CHAPTER XX.

And now Adelaide, subduing her tears, hastened to compose her letter to her guardian; and as from her heart each sentence rose spontaneously, it proved not the epistle of ingratitude or insensibility: and having too many themes to address this beloved, paternal friend upon to admit of her letter being a short one, a message had arrived from Lady Leyburn to summon her ere she proceeded to the conservatory, where all the inmates of the abbey, except Lord De Moreland and Montagu Bouverie, were assembled; when Adelaide entered, and gracefully apologized for her tardiness.

"It would have been of no consequence, my dear," said Lady Leyburn, in an unusual tone of condescension, "only that it deprived us of the pleasure of your company, and delayed a little the commencement of our work; since we make it a rule to explore our treasures at the same moment, and all at once discover what our Strephons have provided for us. That is

your basket, my love, distinguished by the willow green; for as you were not here to decorate it, we thought that appropriate colour would suit the simplicity of your taste."

Lady Ambrosia, perceiving by the expression of her husband's countenance that he was hurt and displeased at the improper innuendo relative to the willow, to hide her betraying confusion, dashed open her basket, and displayed a collection far exceeding that of any lady present, when, with exultation, she exclaimed—

"There! ye spinsters! is not that famous for a married woman?—But why do you look so eagerly at these flowers, duke? do you recognise them for acquaintances?"

"I have seen some of them before, certainly," replied the duke, with an embarrassed air, and with evidently a chagrined aspect.

"Oh, fie! but you should not betray who you toiled for," responded her ladyship, affectedly.

At this moment Lord De Moreland and Montagu entered, unsuccessful in their search for flowers, as all the nurseryman's

plants were already in requisition for Lady Leyburn's ball; and, at the same instant, Adelaide, to conceal the conscious blush which the entrance of Montagu suffused her cheeks with, dashed open the lid of her test of estimation, and discovered a collection she was by no means prepared for; although had the basket been totally empty she would not have felt surprised, and certainly not mortified, since Montagu was not a defaulter in the business: but although unprepared for what she found, her promptly rising pride swelled into self-possession, which conquering timidity, turned the intended mortification into a pointless jest.

"Does your ladyship," demanded Adelaide, with perfect composure, "mean to supply antidotes for the poisons of dissipation this evening, since here seems for my department an arrangement of medicinal herbs? Does your ladyship wish them wove in fancy wreathes, or into chaplets for the brows of those who may require them?"

"What means all this? who could have filled my dear niece's basket with these

odious simples? Faugh! the smell of them will make us all sick!" exclaimed Lady Leyburn, with a well sustained appearance of surprise.

"I would give a thousand guineas to know who performed this *jeu d'esprit!*" exclaimed the Duke of St. Kilda, indignantly; "and who was so obliging as to remove the flowers which I was for two hours carefully selecting, and myself put into Miss Bouverie's basket."

"Deposit the money, and may I never handle a guinea but I'll discover the witty performers for you," exclaimed Lord Leyburn, eagerly: "I have a fellow-feeling in the discovery myself, for my collection was all deposited in my cousin's basket, and so, for that matter, was Westland's and Lord Norwood's, and all the best of Dan Blackthorn's, and a sly sprig of myrtle, or something prodigiously smart, huddled in by Theodore Bouverie.—Nay, nay, look not so pale and aghast, Ambrosia, for I saw him pop a larger beaupot into yours."

"I—I," said Theodore, in much confusion, "I, fearing to be convicted of so unfashionable a foible as exclusive homage to

my wife, made an offering to every lady."

"Will you deposit the money though, my lord duke?" exclaimed the avaricious Lord Leyburn.

"My honour is the guarantee for it."

"Desist, I command you, Leyburn!" exclaimed his mother, in alarm at apprehended discoveries; and so highly disconcerted at the duke's proclaimed attention to Miss Bouverie, she felt at that moment disposed to contradict every one. "You know I permit no bets, no species of gambling here."

"But this is only a reward for bringing offenders to punishment, mother."

"Lord Leyburn, I second the wishes of your mother that no speculating, pecuniary negotiations should be carried on beneath my roof," said Lord De Moreland; "and as to the offenders, leave them to the unheeded contempt they merit, since the sweetness of my Adelaide's temper no mean witticism had power to ruffle. That Miss Bouverie's most highly informed, most refinedly polished guardian practised the honourable and useful profession of

physic she cannot feel shame to acknowledge; and that she has seen such herbs before, nay more, has heard their uses, she denies not; and might confess, if she would eulogise herself, that many a suffering child of malady and penury has received from her hand the mitigating balm distilled from the charity and skill of Doctor Falkland."

"Oh, yes!" said Lord Leyburn, anxiously seizing the opportunity of saying a civil thing to Adelaide, "I remember, my lord, when my cousin was an almost infant, she would twaddle about with physic to the sick, and money and food to the poor."

"*Twaddle!*" repeated Montagu, indignantly: "your memory, Lord Leyburn, might lead you to retrace her form, gliding like an infant Hebe, borne on the wings of zephyrs, to distribute, with alacrity's fleet speed, oil, and wine, and balm, to every suffering individual, as the cherub almoner of charity and pity."

"I remember it all as well as you do," returned his lordship, a little sullenly; "though not in such appropriate colour-

ing. However, suppose we all fly off on some of these aforesaid zephyrs wings, if they are stout enough for such a purpose, and go seek a new store for my beautiful cousin, whose temper is certainly proved by this experiment to be sweeter than the sweetest flower she has been robbed of."

"We cannot spare any of you, for you must wait upon us, and amuse us with your *agrémens* while we work," exclaimed Lady Leyburn, in a tone of not to be suppressed chagrin. "As to Miss Bouverie, I suppose it will be considered as no mortification by her to assist others in the formation of their wreathes, now she knows so large an assortment had been intended for her."

"Indeed, Ma'am, I was just meditating to offer my services to Ambrosia, whose quantity of materials seems to call for aid, even through pity, to lighten her toil," said Adelaide, smiling with ineffable sweetness.

"Possibly you think I have some of your stores, Adelaide," said Lady Ambrosia, haughtily; "and I am sure I shall esteem it a particular favour, if any one

can ascertain among my heaps the flowers they culled for you, if they would unceremoniously restore them to you; and if I knew there were any of yours amongst mine, I—"

"You would still have a greater wish to open a partnership upon the firm of Bouverie," exclaimed Theodore, in a tone that rallied the injudiciously retreating good humour of his wife. "My lovely cousin, Ambrosia invites you to the seat beside her, to work on one flower, like Hermia and Helena."

Lady Ambrosia, with rather an awkward effort at conciliation, made room for Adelaide; but still the mortification was rankling in her heart, that the Duke of St. Kilda had proclaimed his having spent two hours selecting flowers for Adelaide; and had not her vanity whispered the flattering palliative that his grace dissimulated, to lull the suspicions of her husband, so represented by her mother as a jealous one, she could not have sustained the semblance even of the composure she attempted to wear.

At length Colonel Westenra, with some

officers of his regiment, arrived; when the colonel apologized for himself and friends not having been in time to assist in culling sweets for the sweeter purpose of paying homage to the fair, by their having unfortunately been compelled to attend a court of inquiry.

"But now we are arrived, Lady Leyburn," said the colonel, "who will we assist in this elegant manufacture?"

"That you must inform me," replied her ladyship, smiling.

"Will I assist Lady Ambrosia, Ma'am," he said; when impetuously flying towards her beautiful ladyship, he beheld the Duke of St. Kilda, who was a very old friend of his; when much surprise and much sincere greeting was the consequence of this unexpected meeting.

"I thought your regiment was still at Northampton, Westenra," said his grace.

"And I thought you were yet in Scotland, surveying the fallow acres just devolved to you," returned the colonel; "and if it had not been for that supposition, there is no spot I would sooner ex-

pect to be finding your grace in than Roscoville Abbey at this present moment."

The archly intelligent glance of the colonel's eye towards Adelaide, and the duke's responding, conspicuous blush, awakened new alarms for the vanity of Lady Ambrosia.

"Why there has been Clayton of your regiment staying at our barracks these two days, and he knew nothing of your being here no more than I did," continued the colonel, smiling; "and pretty histories he has been giving me relative to a certain friend of mine."

"Histories!" repeated his grace, consciously.

"Ay, authentic ones, of Benedict the second, who vowed all his life he never would marry until—as it now appears—he found a woman whom he could love better than liberty."

"Romance! romance all!" exclaimed the duke, endeavouring to banter.

"Not a morsel of romance; not one bit of humbug, I'll engage," returned the undauntedly good-humoured colonel, who

so dearly loved to plague a man in love, it was difficult to turn him from his pastime, and more difficult still to quarrel with him for it. "This Benedict, I find, has turned fisherman; and, although a wary Scot, took bait to catch himself. Why the deuce! not an Irishman of us all could have performed a more appropriate exploit than that. To bait the hook with a fine turbot to catch himself! and then to get so neatly invited to dine where the fascinator was to feast. Upon my honour, not even Irish bulls or Irish brass could have managed better!"

"Nay, nay," said the duke, attempting to laugh, "you should not tell tales out of school, man. I must call Clayton out for a *babillard*."

"Why who said Clayton chattered about you? I only told you he talked of Benedict the second. Well, come, I will have a little discretion for once in my life, and won't open the bag for puss to spring out this time." For the colonel now perceiving he not only made Miss Bouverie but Lady Ambrosia uncomfortable too, thought it high time to desist.

"But, Lady Leyburn," exclaimed the volatile colonel, "we are going to attempt a ball at our barracks, and will you and your party honour us with attending it?"

"Oh! certainly, we shall have great pleasure in doing so," replied her ladyship, endeavouring to appear serene, although much discomposed by the colonel's innuendos relative to the duke, although, by not understanding the allusion to the fish, not so deeply in the unexpected secret as Lady Ambrosia; whose vanity now was in such direful terror at a possible triumphant retaliation preparing for Adelaide, that a thousand times she wished herself in her husband's cottage.

"You must know, Lady Leyburn, that there is a considerable wager pending," continued the colonel, "between our garrison and that of W——, relative to which shall collect most surpassing beauty at our respective balls, which each garrison is to give in the course of a fortnight. So now be remembering, Lady Leyburn, that you will not disappoint us, since the success of our wager depends on you and your party.

Come, pray, Lady Ambrosia, name the day for our ball—what night will we give it?"

"I cannot possibly name it, Colonel Westenra," replied her ladyship; "since I cannot have the pleasure of attending it, as I set out to-morrow, or the day after, for Hampshire."

"How is this?" exclaimed Lady Leyburn: I knew not any time was fixed for your departure."

"Nor has there, mamma; but as Theodore has important business at home, I think it my duty to name the first possible day for our departure."

"But no day is a possible one until after our ball," said Colonel Westenra.

"Well, we will talk of it in the evening; I will tell you my determination then," said Lady Ambrosia.

"Well then, pray be merciful to our wager. But why have ye not more roses for these wreathes? I think they would look mighty elegant. And where is your arbutus? Will I go gather some for you?"

"Arbutus we have not in the abundance which your country boasts; and as to roses, you monopolized so many in your

gallant decoration of Ambrosia's palfry, there were but few spared for us," said Theodore, smiling—smiling from his heart; since he now found the antidote to Lady Leyburn's poisons was operating in the bosom of his wife.

"Apropos of horses!" exclaimed Colonel Westenra—"I expect a most beautiful one next week; it is just landed from Barbary for me. You must give me your opinion of it, duke, as soon as it arrives."

"Certainly," replied the duke.

"Is it owing to my cousin's deep skill in the art of drawing," exclaimed Lord Leyburn, "that she contrives to form her wreathes ten thousand times more beautifully than you do, Ambrosia?"

"It is owing to Montagu's art in selecting, not her skill in the art of drawing," replied Lady Ambrosia, half pouting.—"Every thing that is pretty he twitches out of the basket for her. I declare he is like the prince in the Fairy Tale, by magic arranging the feathers in the tub into an easy task for his beautiful mistress."

The cheeks of Adelaide now out-blushed

the brightest rose before her at this observation; and neither the duke's nor Montagu's escaped a brilliant suffusion too.

Colonel Westenra now expressing a fear that Adelaide would find no such beautiful wreathes as those she formed at their barrack ball, it transpired that she was going into Kent the succeeding day with her uncle.

"Lord De Moreland," said the Duke of St. Kilda, with an air of conscious embarrassment, "it is somewhat singular that we both should have important business to take us into Kent the same day. I am ordered to join my regiment at Seaview, and must set out to-morrow."

"Oh! pussy, pussy! what a spring out was there!" humorously exclaimed Colonel Westenra: "I wonder who opened the bag for your escape? Hey! duke! how will you be able to give me your opinion of my Barbary horse next week, when you are going to Seaview to-morrow? But how suddenly the order for joining your regiment arrived! and how secretly, too! for not a soul of us saw it delivered."

The confusion which the inadvertent

colonel now threw his grace into was beyond concealment: for having learned the Duke of St. Kilda had been for months the devoted adorer of Miss Bouverie, he took for granted he was her declared, and on finding him at her uncle's, her accepted wooer; he therefore had no idea of his raillery being ill-timed, or the awkward situation he threw his friend into; who promptly determined, as the most delicate method of proceeding towards the evidently distressed Adelaide, not one moment to delay informing her uncle of the true, the firm basis the raillery he had just heard was reared on; and in visible trepidation, the agitated Duke of St. Kilda abruptly took the arm of Lord De Moreland, and entreating a private audience, they retired from the conservatory together.

Nor was the poor duke alone agitated; Adelaide felt like a culprit about to destroy the happiness of a fellow-being: her countenance blanched to the lily's hue, and she trembled like a blossom fluttering in the wind; whilst Montagu, distressed for her, and sincerely pitying the disappointment of his grace, secretly pressed

the hand of his lovely betrothed, and in a whisper tenderly entreated her to be composed, since she had nothing to censure herself for relative to the Duke of St. Kilda.

But the agitation of Adelaide sunk into almost insensibility when compared to the tumult of sensations which tortured the mind and frame of Lady Ambrosia, humbled now, and so publicly, by an event her vanity had been unprepared for. The man she believed the captive of her own charms, whom she had long openly sighed for, whom she had given every encouragement to for addressing her, and whom she had boasted to every one was still her adorer—he now, in the very face of all who knew the delusions of her vanity, proved he had been upon a different pursuit the whole of her deceptive dream, and to have love sufficient for Adelaide to overcome his reluctance to a wedded life: and now with difficulty could her pride compel her to retain her seat, and gulp down a rising flood of disappointment's tears; and finding employment in industriously plucking asunder the wreath she

had but just completed, she remained for new tortures to be inflicted by the malice of her sisters.

Ladies Seraphina and Celestina having, with jealous wariness, perceived the marked attentions of Montagu Bouverie to Adelaide, and having observed his emotion on the duke's retreat with their uncle, ascribed it at once to apprehension of so potent a rival; and secure their blushing country cousin would not reject an actual duke for the presumptive heir to an earldom, they determined to have full vengeance upon Montagu, by convincing him, with every possible attendant humiliation, that his hopes of obtaining Adelaide were menaced with destruction.

"Why what a sly puss has my sanctified cousin here had tied up in this aforesaid bag, unknown to any of us!" exclaimed Lady Celestina, laughing; "which would have only been emancipated by the parson, had not you, good Colonel Westenra, given it a friendly jerk out for us. Mamma, we must have the wedding here. Seraphina and myself must be the bridesmaids."

"And how sly Ambrosia has been in the business too!" said Lady Seraphina, still more invidiously. "Affecting to believe, or at least striving to make us all believe, the duke a despairing inamorato of her own, on purpose to carry on a masqued battery for her mighty friend Adelaide."

"I command you, young ladies, to desist," exclaimed Lady Leyburn, in painful alarm, lest her daughter Ambrosia should be led into betraying the bitter pangs of her humbled vanity. "Colonel Westenra might with propriety rally his friend, but it is ill-natured in you to attack a young woman upon so serious a subject before so many strangers. Ambrosia, my love, go walk with your dear cousin until our collation is ready, who, I dare say, will be happy to escape from the unmerciful raillery of your sisters."

Lady Ambrosia would have been most thankful to escape from such a painful situation by any means, save that of accompanying her now triumphant cousin; yet she could not but comply with her mother's desire, lest she should betray still more how

deeply she was mortified: she therefore arose to attend our heroine, who upon her part, in the sweet benignity of her gentle nature, submitted to the appearance of finding it necessary to retreat from d tressing raillery, solely for the purpose removing Lady Ambrosia from a scene t painful to her humbled feelings.

The moment Montagu perceived brother was following the retreating co sins, he felt the interdict from delica to his accompanying them removed, a therefore joined the party, to the gr relief of Adelaide, who promptly read Lady Ambrosia's aspect no degree of c diality towards her.

Although the heart of Theodore w wrung with anguish by the discove which the vanity of his wife had led h to make of so many things to condemn her disposition, and to admire in her co sin's; and although indignation and so displeasure were ebulliating in his boso against her at that moment, he yet remembered she was his wife, and as such he determined to treat her with kindness, gentleness, and confidence; therefore the

moment they quitted the conservatory he gave her his support, and said—

"I fear, my love, the smell of so many flowers proved too much for you."

Lady Ambrosia, struck to the heart by this tone of kindness, which she was conscious of not meriting, burst into a spontaneous flood of tears.

"We had better, my Adelaide, leave them to a *tête-à-tête*," said Montagu; "since our presence will only prove an embarrassment to her mortified ladyship in this scene of penitence or passion which these tears announce."

Adelaide believing, too, their absence most advisable, turned with Montagu into another path; when Lady Ambrosia, in full gratitude to her husband for kindness in such an unmerited moment, dried up her tears with all convenient speed, and affecting to be quite restored by the air, put on at once the most attractive aspect of fascinating sweetness she could assume; yet still so much a penitent in heart, as sensibly to regret the nature of her offence and folly had been such as to preclude her candidly deploring it to him, and suppli-

cating for his cordial, unqualified forgiveness.

The *tête-à-tête* walk of Montagu and Adelaide was at length terminated by the successful search of a servant, sent by Lady Leyburn to desire the return of our heroine to the conservatory, since no wreathes were so beautiful as those she made.

"Where is Ambrosia?" Lady Leyburn demanded, the moment Adelaide appeared. "Upon my word, you are a pretty idle pair, to hide yourselves so completely from our search the gentlemen and domestics have been in pursuit of you this half hour."

Adelaide mentioned the spot she had parted with her cousin in.

"Lord!" exclaimed her ladyship, "that husband of hers will never be any thing, I foresee, but an adoring lover all his life! I dare say he was deplorably wretched until he contrived to inveigle her away from you, to make his tender adorations to her. Well, well! I cannot wonder, for she is a heavenly creature! and so attached to him, she preferred love in his cottage to all the coronets which were offering to her."

"Coronets!" cried Lady Celestina.—

"Why, you must be dreaming, Ma'am! Ambrosia never had an offer in her life but Theodore's."

"And his she did not come very lawfully by," said Lady Seraphina; "for she was compelled to seduce her friend's liege lover from his engagement to get even him."

"No such thing," returned their mother, endeavouring to laugh; "no such thing, you jealous pair! who always are aiming to mortify me about Ambrosia, because you fancy she is my favourite."

"Dear Ma'am, how can you deny it? However, no one minds what you say," exclaimed Lady Seraphina, most dutifully; "and you know how both you and she made a boast of having lured her rich cousin's lover from his engagement."

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Lord Leyburn. "Just like your saying the Duke of St. Kilda is in love with Ambrosia. Mighty like a whale! that Theodore Bouverie, as poor as a church mouse, would have given up Adelaide, with her noble fortune and immense expectations, for my affected sister, with scarcely a *sou* to bless

herself with. Why there is Dan Blackthorn would not believe one of you, were you even upon oath at the Old Bailey that Theodore could be such a flat to forsake Adelaide—if he ever had a chance of her."

At this moment Lord De Moreland entered, and terminated by his presence a discussion so annoying to Adelaide and Montagu.

"What have you done with the duke, uncle?" demanded Lady Celestina, inquisitively.

"Our conference was not a long one, and since we separated I have been a solitary ramble," returned his lordship, in a tone that betrayed to Montagu and Adelaide his pity for his grace had been powerfully awakened.

A servant now appeared, who delivered a note to Lady Leyburn, which he said the Duke of St. Kilda had left for her ladyship at the moment of his departure.

The highly amazed and disconcerted Lady Leyburn now requesting permission from the circle, eagerly broke open the billet, and read to her mortified self—

"DEAR MADAM,

"The purpose for which I drew Lord De Moreland from the conservatory must be conjectured by you; and knowing, as you doubtlessly do, the misery was for me to hear from your amiable, your feeling brother, that the object of my unalienable adoration, your too lovely niece, is under an irrevocable engagement to a happier man—your ladyship cannot wonder that I fear it would be agony too great for endurance to remain one moment longer where my anguish would only be augmented by increase of idolatry: you will, therefore, I trust, excuse the abruptness of my almost distracted departure, and believe me,

"Dear Madam,

"Your ladyship's

"most obliged

"and sincerely devoted servant,

"ST. KILDA."

Lady Leyburn made no audible comment upon this billet; but although her mind was tortured with mortification and disappointed projects of villanous avarice, her curiosity yet was so potently awakened

to learn if her conjecture was just relative to the engagement of Adelaide, that she eagerly availed herself of the opportunity afforded to her, while the servants were arranging the collation, of calling her brother to a momentary conference, in which she learned the annihilation of one of her most favourite plots, by Montagu Pouverie having, in compliance with the late Lord De Moreland's wishes, addressed one of his great-grandaughters.

Agonizing was the conflict which the pride of Lady Ambrosia compelled her wounded vanity to endure, to convince the inmates of the abbey she felt no mortification from her cousin's triumph; for which purpose she appeared at the collation, where, by every overstrained, unnatural effort, she strove to appear the most vivacious of the mirthful: yet not all the rhetoric or the flattering regrets of Colonel Westenra could prevail upon her to postpone her journey into Hampshire, to win the wager for his corps.

And during the splendid, elegant, and well attended ball of Lady Leyburn, given in fallacious expectation of great events

arising from it, this vanity inthralled young woman met many an augmenting pang for her writhing mortification, through the eulogiums which still stole on her eagerly devouring yet recoiling ear upon the fascinations of her cousin; who, in the firmness of mental dignity, suffered no elation to appear from the retributive triumph so publicly afforded to her that very morning.

And full of all the anguished misery of one to whom humiliation was agony, Lady Ambrosia weathered out this evening, which she had looked delusively to as one of exultation to her ruling passion; and about noon the following day she, with her husband, quitted Roscoville Abbey, to proceed to the cottage they had trampled down the laws of gratitude and honour to live in upon love; but now in the sad reverse a very few months had presented to them, without much expectation upon either side of finding love the inmate of their dwelling.

And at the same hour also Lord De Moreland and his adopted children set out for London, where they continued a few days, whilst his lordship arranged some

necessary business with his civilians, and Montagu set in train an exchange from General Harley's regiment, by depositing money in his agent's hands to purchase the very first lieutenant-colonelcy that could be obtained in any of the cavalry regiments then in England.

As Adelaide had written from Boscoville to Mrs. Aspenfield to request leave to return to her protection during her uncle's absence, a letter awaited her in town from that lady, saying all that was kind and hospitable relative to the pleasure it would have afforded her to receive her beneath her roof; but that pleasure she was compelled now to resign in favour of her daughter, who was at length returned to her home, and all impatient anxiety to behold the *elève* of her husband once more an inmate of Mordaunt Priory, and to implore her pardon for her late vile conduct to her; but too ill to write upon such an affecting subject, she employed her mother's pen to implore her dear Ellen's child to come to her and to forgive her.

This restoration to the abode of her guardian, and prospect of renewed amity

with Mrs. Falkland, were of too much importance to Adelaide not to be joyfully acceded to by her and Lord De Moreland, and at length the reluctant separation was effected. Our heroine, struggling with tears which shame forbade to flow, lest they should be ascribed to love and Montagu, set out for Mordaunt Priory, attended by her faithful Obearn and Dennis; and Lord De Moreland, with his heir presumptive, commenced their way to Ireland.

END OF VOL. II.

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